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FEATURING

"HELL'S HINGES"

by

Hamilton Craigie

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A Chat With You

WE are getting quite proud as many of our readers are writing us letters explaining how pleased they are with the improved quality of the stories and articles we are now publishing. You see, constructive criticism has been a very good thing for the editor, as it showed him just what his readers wanted, and thus enabled him to give what they like best. In that way the reader gets the benefit too, for he buys exactly what he wants instead of purchasing a lot of junk. With a guide now to our readers' likes and dislikes, we are careful to buy only the kind of stories that have found favor, and we have been very careful to avoid using the sort that please only a select few. Our aim is to please the masses. Of course this is a hard job, but we want you to know that we are all the time trying to get you the quality of stories that best suit you. With this purpose in view our next offering is a remarkable feature novelette from Katherine Stagg entitled "The Wolf." The writer of this strange story has based it upon a little known scientific fact which any one can verify with a dictionary. The story is full of vivid description, deep interest and sustained suspense. The finish is intensely dramatic. The authoress is a well-known playwright and is responsible for "The Little Hussar" that made a big hit some time ago. Among the short stories is one concerning the underworld entitled "False Fingers." It was written by Kenneth Duane Whipple. Another good story by Hamilton Craigie will be issued under the title of "A Police Case," and Earl Norton contributes a crook story entitled "Ten-Spot Helps the Police." We will also have a detective story from J. Chatteris Livitt called "The Affair on the Highway," and the serial "The Voice of Horror," begun in this number, ends in the next issue. In the Oracle Department we will issue another article called "Numerology." It explains all the values and superstitions relating to numbers, and is very interesting. There will also be an extra large collection of other splendid matter that will surprise and please you. There is as much material and of just the same good quality that you pay 25 cents for in some other magazines, and yet we are selling it for only 10 cents. Have you ever thought of that?

THE EDITOR.

HELL'S HINGES

by

Hamilton Craigie

CHAPTER ONE

THE grizzled inspector of police leaned forward facing the man in plain clothes across the heavy desk.

"Remember, Greg," he said quietly, his frosty blue eye dwelling upon the younger man with a sudden kindling spark, "remember what it is you're up against: *the* unsolved problem of the department—the one case that has had us groping in the dark ever since Charlie O'Beirne's time."

He paused, his glance again, in a brief, flashing, affectionate appraisal, resting upon the blocky, square-jawed youngster with the capable hands and the steady, clear-seeing eyes. The inspector leaned backward in his chair, then abruptly he thrust forward his own fighting chin, leveling a blunt forefinger at his vis-à-vis.

"And don't say I didn't warn you; remember Travis, McAllister, Gunson, they never came back; and, Greg, I wouldn't want to lose you. I couldn't afford it."

Gregory Vinson ground his half-smoked cigar with a quick, decisive motion into the receptacle at his elbow. There was something characteristic in the movement; it was quick and vigorous, just as the whole personality of the man appeared to give forth power and poise. Now he spoke low, scarcely above a whisper:

"Yes, chief, and thank you. I understand, and I'll go through with it if I'm able. But as to this Mong-Tsu."

He turned with the word, his eyes on a sudden gray-green like a cat's. Inspector Haggerty could not have said how it was done, but there was an abrupt, brief explosion of movement; at one moment the sergeant of detectives was sitting calmly in his chair; at the next, a thunderbolt of action, he had risen as if on wings, had gained the door, flung it wide with a single, swooping motion. Then he was into and through the doorway in a plunging rush.

Almost immediately he reappeared, on his keen, good-humored face a deprecatory grin.

"Seeing things and hearing 'em, I guess, chief," he explained. "Nerves a bit jumpy perhaps; too many strong cigars." He grinned again, the inspector smiling with him at the suggestion; nerves and Gregory Vinson—well, there was no such combination.

"Seems foolish, I know, chief," continued the detective sergeant. "Headquarters ought to be a pretty safe place for a policeman, at any rate. But I thought, I was certain—well, never mind. And now"—he lowered his voice to a thin whisper—"as to this Mong-Tsu?"

Inspector Haggerty tugged at the ends of his bristling mustache. "Well, I don't know, Greg," he said slowly. "You see, nobody has ever *seen* him to talk to, anyway, and that's the thing we've got to find out or stand for another panning from the papers, confound 'em! Opium, bootlegging, heroin, cocaine, he's the brains of the whole combination, that much is certain. But whatever he calls himself, Mong-Tsu, the White Chief, the Purple Phantom, he's at the bottom of the whole business, or rather at the top, and now it's up to you!"

Vinson got to his feet with a loose, easy movement. He was not tall, possibly not more than five feet nine. But his shoulders were broad, with that sloping smoothness that tells of long, tensile ropes of muscle; his arms were long, with that slight incurve at the elbow peculiar to the wrestler; he had the light, lifting, springy stride of a panther, of a mountain cat. And he carried his hundred and eighty pounds with a casualness which on more than one occasion in the past had deceived those who had expected to find him sluggish, slow.

Now he turned to Haggerty, extending his hand. They gripped once, the chief, like a fierce old eagle, regarding Vinson with a sombre, brooding gaze.

"Well, good-by, and good luck, Greg. You can do it."

But with his hand on the doorknob Vinson turned.

"All set, inspector," he said. "You'll hear from me, *one way or the other,* within the week."

The door swung shut behind him with a muffled clang.

CHAPTER TWO

A MAN in a dark, tan overcoat, light, thin-soled shoes and a soft, shapeless hat alighted from a taxi at the corner of the street. Here, not twenty paces along the curbing to his left, there swung a grotesquely painted sign of red-and-green-colored glass, swaying in the wind that was just now rising, piping at eave and shutter.

The street was narrow; it was little better than an alley, dark, sinister, piled thick with shadows, bending and swaying to the flare of infrequent lights, like dim eyes peering from the blackness. And all was silence—the thick silence of a late winter night, but behind those closed doors and shuttered windows the man in the tan overcoat knew was life, pulsing to full tide.

Crossing the sidewalk, he paused a moment under the fantastic sign—the sign of the Two Painted Reed Birds—for he knew it well enough. Here it was that Detective Gunson had disappeared, dropping out of sight as if the earth had opened and swallowed him and no least trace of him had ever been discovered.

The Two Painted Reed Birds was scarcely the sort of place where one, seeking, might find innocent amusement; within it was a foul compound of odors and brawling noise when its habitués held high revelry; at times black as the pit, a trap for wandering feet, spewing swift death out of the shadows to the crash of guns, the snick and slither of long knives; in some such fashion Gunson had come upon his hour.

But Vinson was prepared. Like a hound quartering for scent, he would begin here—here, where the clans, the gangs, the tongs met between dark and dawn to breed new deviltry; he would begin here, but not as Travis, McAllister, Gunson had begun; he would begin at the *beginning.*

Opening a door under the swaying sign, Vinson closed it behind him with the gesture of a man who has done with hesitation, with caution. But his keen eyes bored into that blackness just ahead; his hand on the automatic in his pocket, he went forward steadily into that whispering gloom, until his fingers, feeling before him along the wall, had touched the paneled surface of a door.

He gave a peculiar double rap, ending with a rubbing pressure of the thumb; the door swung slowly open, to a pitchy darkness, in which for a moment there was neither sound nor motion.

Then, like a knife-blade cutting the silence, there came a voice. Disembodied, it seemed to float, head high, like a voice without a body.

"What name, then, oh stranger?" it purred in a sort of whispered sing-song. Vinson, lis-

tening, straining his eyes against the velvet black, made out on a sudden a kind of odor, and for a moment he could not place it, and then he knew: the stale reek of opium, blended from a hundred pipes. He answered then without more ado:

"He who shall be nameless and without a name."

A light sprang up, dancing upon floor and wall, steadied, and the bright beam of the pocket flash rested upon the intruder in a blinding flood. For perhaps two ticks of the watch it held steady, then fell away. A door opened, letting in a confused and murmurous babble of voices, a dull gleaming from a score of lamps, the strong savor of the pipes commingled with the acrid tang of stale tobacco smoke, mounting to the rafters in flat, drifting layers from a score of tables.

No one appeared to pay Vinson any attention. His face was not generally known to the denizens of the underworld, and to make assurance doubly sure the small mustache which he had grown aided measurably in his incognito. But he had put his head into the lion's jaws; it was quite possible that any one of the men and women in the place might at any moment recognize him, and then——

The password was not merely a password; it was more; in a moment now might come the test, and the manner of it, despite the information filtering back from Travis, from McAllister, from Gunson before they had disappeared from the ken of man, Vinson did not know. With a desperate hardihood he had essayed first of all the supreme and perilous step; in a moment now he would be a member of that organization, the name of which even was unknown to the police, or he would be but himself a name to add to those who had gone before.

There were many tables in the place, and from these there came now a subdued and murmurous conversation. Gunmen; sleek, slim, furtive-eyed Chinese; men whose flat, dead-white color bespoke a mingling of bloods; women, for the most part rouged out of all semblance—they drank and smoked, talked, gestured like puppets in a dream.

Vinson, finding a table near the door, sat down. Almost immediately, as if materialized out of the murky air, a soft-footed attendant was at his elbow. Ordering tea, his veiled glance roved around the long room, to rest, on a sudden, on a party of three at a table at his right.

There was a girl, and immediately the detective sensed a difference, for she was white, pallid, and even as he looked her glance plumbed his. There was entreaty in that look and a crawling fear. Vinson half rose in his seat, but the girl had turned her head; doubtless he had been mistaken. And it behooved him to go slow. But he observed the two men with her: one a white man—massive, with great shoulders and a thick neck like a prize-fighter's. He had a heavy, sensual face; instinctively Vinson disliked the man; there was that about him which aroused in him a quick, violent antagonism, how he could not have told. The other man, sallow, negligible, his glance passed over and away.

And then suddenly he heard it: the cry, muffled by a hand; saw the girl rise, sink down again even as the big man seized her by the wrist.

Gregory Vinson had not forgotten his mission, nor for a moment had he minimized its danger, the sheer peril which even now waited at his back, around him on all sides; he saw it in the faces of the wolves roundabout; he sensed it in the heavy, flat air.

A sudden silence had fallen upon the long room as of expectation. It was as if for the moment the great chamber was a stage, and it was Vinson's cue.

With a single lithe movement he was on his feet; in one swift, silent rush he had covered the space between; the big man had half risen in his seat. Now he shouted something inarticulate; Vinson could not catch the words, but in that breathless instant he had acted, his fist, behind it the full weight of his hundred and eighty pounds of iron-hard muscle, driving at the big man's jaw. The punch landed with a cracking thud, but even in the act Vinson knew that it had been a plant.

Upon the instant there was confusion worse confounded, or so it seemed. Out of the tail of his eye, as the big man, grunting, rose to one knee, the detective had one flashing glimpse of the room behind him, and the sight was not reassuring.

From everywhere, as it seemed, they were

coming now in a roaring flood, but, curiously, even as he looked he was aware that no shot had as yet been fired; it was to be the steel, then, was his swift thought as, ducking under a blow aimed at him by the big man's companion, he straightened, sidestepped, there was the sodden impact of fist on flesh and the sallow man crumpled in a loose-jointed, slumping fall.

By now the centre of a cursing tangle of swift motion, Vinson, with the lobe of his brain that was not busy with the desperate urge of his defense, was conscious that, although knives menaced him from every angle, he was as yet by some miracle of Providence untouched.

Ringed around with steel, savage faces, malevolent eyes, he was aware as in a mist of the growling chorus:

"Croak him, th' rummy; bust him wide open; kill—kill!" And, over all, a high, piping, Oriental scream of "Death to the accursed fokie. Death! Death!"

He was aware of a brawny arm at his elbow, in its huge hand a knife, above it a face, grinning, wolfish. He whirled, pivoting upon the balls of his feet like a toe-dancer; his fists lashed out right and left; the face was blotted out. Arms reached, voices gibbered in an insane and furious babbling; they were closer now; he felt the hot breath, the odor of their close-packed bodies; then, in a headlong charge, he was among them.

Men tottered, swayed; then, like straws in a devastating wind, erupting from that milling mass, they sprawled to right and left, shooting upward and outward from the vortex to fall in a grotesque and aimless huddle before that whirlwind charge.

For that is what it was.

Vinson had lost his hat, his coat. He was laughing now, in a berserk fury, multiplying himself—more a machine than a man; a force before which his attackers wilted to the sheer lift and drive of his bone-smashing punches.

The end was very near, he knew, when, reaching for his service pistol, his questing fingers found merely empty space. He began to slug, hitting at every face within that narrowing circle, when, of a sudden, a man crawling on his belly through the press reached forth a hand. Fingers of steel gripped Vinson about the ankle, he lurched, stumbled, recovered, fell forward on his face; a suffocating, dead weight descended upon him like a vast and smothering blanket.

He went down, down into a soundless sea in which all sound and sense merged in a deep and abiding peace.

CHAPTER THREE

AFTER a timeless interval Vinson awoke, blinking in the glare of a single brilliant arc. Trussed like a fowl, at first he could see nothing; then presently he made out a semicircle of faces, or rather they were not faces, as such, but merely eyes, surveying him in a silent, cold, unwinking malignance, masked each as to the features with a black velvet domino.

Vinson could not understand why he had not been murdered out of hand, and then, hardy as he was, his flesh crawled at a sudden daunting thought: they had saved him, and for what if not for those unspeakable rites hinted at but never proven, which it was alleged had been practiced upon its enemies by the tong of the White Tiger, for example.

But if this was a tong it numbered white men in it, which in itself was nothing unusual, save that here what Chinamen there were appeared to be in a decided minority. And as for Mong-Tsu—doubtless Vinson would go to his death as ignorant as he had ever been of the identity of the man who was known variously as Tong-Tsu, the White Chief, the Purple Phantom.

And now, as he watched, a masked attendant, a big man with arms simian in their suggestion of tremendous strength, came wheeling a brazier, the live coals glinting redly through its medieval lattice-work. Followed a guttural command in a language unknown to Vinson; a tall man, garbed in a black domino with a pointed hood, stepped forward, in his hand an implement which for the moment Vinson did not recognize, and then his pulses raced, steadied. It was the end.

Unreal, fantastic as the crimson dream of an opium smoker: the hooded figures, the brazier, the intense and speaking silence, the

bound man in the chair. It was nevertheless real and actual, for beneath their fantastic ceremonial, the masks, the silence, these men were deadly serious; it showed in their eyes, grim, cold, unwinking. They would kill him slowly, with a gloating certitude, sure of their vengeance, safe from the teeming world without, as if it had been leagues distant, centuries removed.

A voice sounded abruptly with a harsh croak:

"Make ready."

The huge attendant, Vinson thought him a Chinaman, probably a Manchu from his size, strode forward to mid-circle. He bowed once to the silent figures; then, with a swift, soundless step, stood facing the bound man in the chair.

The detective, eyes held steadily before him, gave him look for look in a stony calm. And then, by a tremendous effort of the will, he braced his nerves, his muscles, to repress the cry that rose upward to his stiff lips. There came a sudden hissing and a smell of scorched flesh.

The giant stepped backward, plunging the hot iron into a bucket close at hand. There arose a deep-toned yet muffled shout, the masks came away, a voice penetrated as through a crimson mist:

"Welcome to the Nameless Ones!"

Vinson, his bonds severed by a knife-slash, raised his arm wonderingly to the light. He was alive then! And then his dulled gaze beheld a cicatrice upon his forearm: a tiny, triangular burn where the branding-iron had seared deep its mark.

A tall man, dressed in a fashionably cut coat, trousers creased to a knife-edge of perfection, came forward, offering a hand, white, slim, the nails manicured to a glowing pink. He might have been a lawyer, a statesman, save for the eyes, mere pin-points of steel set in a face like granite. He spoke in a cultivated voice:

"Welcome, sir, to the Nameless Ones. You have passed the test! May I offer my congratulations?"

For the moment Vinson could not credit it, and then, as one after another the rest came forward, his pulses sang to the quick beat of the brain, questioning, insistent. Surely, surely some among them would recognize him! And when they did——

But as he listened, and no accusing finger was leveled at his head, no voice took up the cry of betrayal, the realization filled him with a savage joy. Once free and he would be in possession of evidence sufficient to set the city by the ears. For among the faces which he beheld were not a few the very mention of whose names would have ere this stirred the Department to a frenzy of activity. There was Redfield, for instance, supergunman, wanted these three years by the police; Frisco Red Masterman, of lesser fame, but a fugitive from justice since Vinson could remember; there were others.

For in this strange Port of Missing Men they had lain hidden, adventuring forth doubtless under other names and faces, and now——

Vinson gathered from the talk that the fight in which he had engaged had in reality been the gauntlet of his admission to the Nameless Ones. Carefully staged, it had, however, gotten somewhat out of hand by reason of the detective's prowess with his fists, his fighting flame. But this, if anything, was to operate in his favor. He felt himself the recipient of visible glances of respect; they could use him, there was no doubt of that.

And presently, the wound treated in a thoroughly workmanlike manner by a man who, Vinson was convinced, was a physician of parts, the tall man again approached him.

"It will heal in no time at all," he told the detective. "Meanwhile," his voice sank to a purring whisper, "there will be work for you to do."

His eyes filmed with a savage, brooding, introspective stare.

"There are two—two men, two Nameless Ones no longer."

Vinson was abruptly conscious of a sudden contraction of the heart as the hissing syllables went on:

"These two upon whom has been passed the sentence of the Nameless Ones the council has decided that in three days they must pay the penalty. They have been removed; you are to go, to bear a message, a command."

His voice fell still lower, naming a street and number; then abruptly his gaze plumbed

Vinson's like a sharp sword, questioning, savage.

Vinson endured that burning gaze with a straight, level look; the tall man, as if satisfied with what he saw, nodded twice. He called sharply in a high sing-song, again in those queer syllables Vinson could not place. Then he turned again to Vinson.

"It is time," he said. "You will report again this evening. And"—his tone held a suggestion of silken threat—"we will be waiting.

The detective got stiffly to his feet. His arm ached; he felt tired and bruised, shaken, in spite of himself, by the ordeal through which he had but lately passed. But nothing of this showed in his face as he turned to the tall man with the benignant head and the fierce, brooding eyes.

He nodded dumbly in answer; then, as a door in the wall slid open noiselessly, at a sign from the tall man he followed the gigantic Chinaman outward into the night.

The hour was perhaps four in the morning. A speaking silence held as, following his guide down an interminable, narrow hall, a door clicked open at the farther end.

Vinson passed through, the door slid shut behind him. Above his head, through the drifting cloud-rack, he could see the pale stars. He was alone.

CHAPTER FOUR

VINSON, remembering the face that he had seen or thought that he had seen when he had flung open the door of the inspector's private office, strove to recall it as being present in that dim chamber of the Nameless Ones. But it had not been there; he was certain of it. They did not suspect him as yet. His commission had been a roving one; few if any in the underworld knew him by sight; it was for this reason, if for no other, that he had achieved a success that had been little short of phenomenal.

Now, as he walked briskly along the deserted street, his thoughts were busy with that street and number to which he had been sent. The messag[illegible]; he smiled grimly; he would see to it that it was delivered, but in his own way. And if it were true—that which he suspected—in a very little time, if his luck held, there would be an end of the Society of the Nameless Ones and of Mong-Tsu.

His walk brought him, after perhaps five minutes, to a cab-rank at the corner of two main-traveled avenues. Singling out a battered taxi, whose driver, a hard-bitten fellow with a villainous, pock-marked countenance, observed him with a sleepy-lidded stare, Vinson named a street and number, but it was not the street and number given him there in that dim chamber below the street.

But once in the cab, producing a tablet and pencil, he wrote furiously for a moment; then, tapping on the window-glass, spoke hurriedly and low:

"Jerry, you take this in person to the inspector; get me? And drive as if all hell were after you, which it will be if you don't."

Then he subsided in his seat at the throaty answer:

"Ay, sir, sergeant, Jerry'll do it, an' you c'n lay to that."

Turning the corner on two wheels, the taxi careened, righted, roaring off into the night. For an interval Vinson considered the chances. If it were true, the thing that he suspected; his hand closed on the pistol-butt in his pocket as they had returned it to him, and that was something. But if it were true. Vinson dared not believe it, and then, as the taxi stopped suddenly with a grinding of brakes, he had landed, running even as it gathered speed.

The two blocks to his destination he covered at a racing gait. He knew that house, and, too, if he was not mistaken, he knew a way into it that even its inmates did not suspect. He had the password, but he was not depending on that. If Jerry failed him—but Jerry would not fail, he could not.

The black mouth of an alley yawned at his right. Here, if his memory served him, he would find that which he sought. And here, as he quested among the rubbish at his feet, he found it buried under refuse: an opening of manhole size, barred with a rusty trap-door.

The detective knelt, fumbling for a handhold in the rusted iron. Time pressed; at any moment now he might be betrayed; that face,

that slinking figure peering at the doorway, might even now have named him to the Nameless Ones.

He strained, tugging mightily; there came a creaking, a sagging; abruptly he was sliding, slipping down a sort of narrow chute foul with the odors of the years. And then as suddenly he found himself prone in ooze; near at hand there sounded the ceaseless slow dripping of water upon stone, the squeak and scurry of rats, the slap and gurgle of water against piling.

To Vinson, crouching there in the murmurous dark, there came again the story, a tradition merely of a foul and noisome prison, a tomb, an oubliette; some said it dated from Revolutionary days; others, whispering behind their hands, hinted at nameless horrors of the Mafia, the Suicide Club, the dark and devious time of slave-running, of midnight whippings, of private feuds active in carpet-bagging days.

The house was an old one; none knew how old. As Vinson knelt it came to him abruptly as to how it had been called *Hell's Hinges*. For, so the story ran, there was a great cistern of iron, moving on vast flanges; its bottom rested just above the dim tide of the river's flow. And when occasion arose, at the turning of a lever from above the great leaves would open and any within that chamber—that anteroom of death—would roll off that great door like peas out of a pan into the silence and oblivion of a No-Man's Land, whence none had ever returned.

Vinson, groping forward in the intense and smothering darkness, heard all at once a murmur stifled, as if it came through many thicknesses of walls. He bent an ear, listening with all his soul. But the sound was not repeated.

"It ought to be here," he muttered half aloud. "It must be."

His hand, outstretched before him in the smothering gloom, felt slimy steel, tightened, the fingers curling about a huge metal handle. He pulled and the great knob moved easily under his hand—oiled, and for recent use!

There came a creaking, a groaning, as of metal upon metal. Producing his pocket-flash, Vinson, in its bright ray, saw what seemed to be a section of solid floor rise upward almost in his face. The creaking ceased. Moving around it with an infinite caution, the detective beheld almost at his feet a yawning chasm; the light, dancing across wall and floor, flashed downward into the pit.

There came a voice, weak but indomitable: "T' the devil wit' ye!"

Vinson's heart gave a sudden leap. For there, in the flashlight's beam, he saw them: two men, or rather two ghosts, filthy, tattered, blood-stained, crouching just beneath; two dead men, in very truth, as it had been believed.

"Travis—McAllister! My God!" breathed Vinson. Then: "It's—it's Vinson, boys!" he called in a harsh whisper. "Just a moment now, and I'll have you out of this."

He knelt, uncoiling a length of stout line which he had brought with him for the purpose, half believing and yet skeptical. Now it would be a lifeline in very truth.

Intent upon his task, pistol beside him on the flooring, he did not hear the swift, stealthy footfall pad-padding like a great cat in the dimness, the whispered word. There came a guttural command:

"Up, and keep 'em there!"

He whirled, to face, behind the dazzling brilliance of the flashlight, a level line of pistols, above them three faces, bestial, avid, agrin with satisfaction and an unholy mirth. But even as Vinson faced his captors the thought was running through his mind: "Where was Gunson?" Evidently in some way he must have made his escape, but where was he?

CHAPTER FIVE

A MAN sat in an office on the top floor of a lofty building commanding a view of the city stretching far as eye could see. He was a tall man, with a head which should have been benignant had it not been for the eyes; the mouth lustful, cunning, indwelling on what secrets the man himself might alone reveal.

The office was luxurious, and perhaps you might have guessed something of the man's inward self by the heavy, soft-padded chairs of a curious purple leather; the carpet, a three-pile Genoa; the massive, ornate desk with its

silver ink-well and inlaid lacquer-work of writing-surface.

By day he bore a name in a high place; his eyes withdrawn as behind a veil; his mouth schooled to a rigid silence which passed for the quietude of a great mind. By night—ah, that was a different matter. For the man in the chair was a very Haroun al Raschid, but a despot of devious ways rather than stealthy justice; for by night he was the Purple Phantom, the White Chief, Mong-Tsu, the Terrible, Ruler of the Nameless Ones, although himself seldom seen, even by his satellites, and then only as a merchant prince of far Cathay, serene, bloodless, behind his Oriental disguise.

Now he lifted a slim, white hand, taking up a newspaper from the desk. And as he read a slow smile of infinite malice curved the pale lips, the eyes on a sudden glowed as if lighted from within:

TAXI DRIVER MYSTERIOUSLY ATTACKED

Jerry Dennison Victim of Brutal Beating Not Expected to Live

That was what he read and, reading, gave him cause for a terrible, swift, silent mirth.

Meanwhile——

In the underground chamber, the chamber of the branding and the test, again Gregory Vinson faced that encircling ring of dominoes, eyes cold and hard, inscrutable behind the all-concealing velvet. A harsh voice spoke with a slow, acid bitterness:

"Brother that was, what have you to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon you, according to law?"

Sensible of the irony of it, the detective could think only of those two whom he had failed in the hour of their greatest need. He was still certain that the clan had not penetrated his incognito, and in that, and in that alone, there rested a faint spark of hope. Perhaps if he had known of that newspaper item, of the silent reader in the tower, he would have abandoned all hope, but he did not.

Instead, his brain quested furiously this way and that, like a squirrel beating against bars; how much or how little did they know? Had they heard him calling to the prisoners? If they had not, well, there might be a chance. Now he raised his head, his glance steady, his hand firm as a rock, his voice even, controlled:

"Nothing," he made answer with a sort of dogged inspiration. "Nothing, only that I was curious, I admit. I didn't think——"

His voice faltered oddly in the middle register. Could it be that he, Gregory Vinson, veteran of a hundred encounters with the jackals of the jungle—could it be that he was breaking, cracking under the strain? Or perhaps——

The speaker turned to a hooded figure at his side, whispering behind his hand. The latter nodded. The inquisitor spoke:

"Number Twenty-three, be it known to you that the council discourages the curious; that which is known, let it be known. That which is unknown, let it be a seal to your eyes, your lips."

He paused, for a heartbeat, his voice gathering strength:

"Hear this decree, the decree of the Council of the Nameless Ones."

It was at that moment that Vinson received the sign. He had not been looking for it; perhaps he would never have seen it if one of the hooded figures had not cleared its throat with a sudden rasp. Vinson, turning his eyes, regarded the man with the brief stare of idle attention, which all at once was fused in a tense and compelling interest. For, as the voice droned on, shocking him broad awake by the frightful burden of the words, he caught the sign.

It was unbelievable, and yet he had seen it: the mere fleeting signal which, at the last, spelled life and hope. And even as he took in the dreadful purport of his sentence his fingers, in answer, made rapid play. It was, in a way, a sort of deaf-and-dumb alphabet, known only to a very few, consisting of a few elementary motions of fingers upon lips and eyes. No one who did not know it could understand it; would even suspect that it possessed other significance than the natural movements of a man lifting a casual hand to mouth or eye.

And when the last bodeful word of that dread sentence had been uttered Vinson had sent his message. He did not pause to won-

der at the presence of this man, nor did he speculate as to his identity—he knew. The message had been given; now he had time to dwell upon the sentence, the carrying-out of which he knew to be his death-warrant.

And this was the manner of it: that within an hour's time he, Number Twenty-three, to prove his loyalty to the Nameless Ones, to atone for his adventure at that dread house of the cistern, would, by his own hand, execute the vengeance of the clan upon——

At the very thought of it his soul sickened within him, his eyes blurred, his fists clenched in a very agony of protest. For, and this was the fact before which he shrank in horror, within the hour he, with his own hand, must kill, in cold blood, a brother officer!

That was the test and the expiation.

As in a daze he heard the concluding words of that unthinkable decree:

"That Number Twenty-three, accompanied by Five and Seven, shall, at the time and place appointed, proceed, as aforesaid, to the corner of Spring and Varick streets, and there the said Twenty-three shall execute the vengeance of the clan with a pistol provided for the purpose."

Spring and Varick! Vinson knew that corner only too well, and he knew, too, that the genial patrolman who had passed and repassed that corner a thousand times was Charlie Tomlinson, a man whom he had known and loved as a brother many a year!

As in a dream he followed the hooded figures of Five and Seven; as in a dream, as a prisoner marching to his doom, the three, their hoods discarded, himself in the middle, had gained the street.

Like figures in a dream, the three went onward. In a moment now, a minute of time, an hour of suspense, would come the meeting. After that——

And now Number Five, a swart, black-avised Sicilian, had fallen behind with Seven, a grim, bodeful figure with an implacable, grim mouth. Well Vinson knew that if he hesitated by the merest fraction of a second the two would shoot him where he stood with the calm, impersonal sang-froid of the gunman. For them it would be all in the day's work. And if he hoped to go through with his mission, to rid the city of this scourge, to remain an established member of the clan, he must do their bidding.

Perhaps his brain may have worked in some such fashion; perhaps, behind the grim mask that was his face, he meditated the supreme sacrifice, refusing at the last the bitter gage. But nothing of this was apparent in his face.

Ahead of them, as they went onward, there loomed that fateful corner, and in the distance the blue uniform, the sun winking on the shield; in a moment now it would be over either way.

The policeman was perhaps ten paces distant when Vinson drew a deep, hissing breath. The officer was nearer now, the sun glinting on that silver shield, bright target for the assassin. Ten paces, five, he came on, swinging his club, whistling a little tune. In the distance the diminishing rattle of an "L" train furnished an obligato, rising and dying into silence.

The officer raised his head, staring straight at Vinson. His mouth opened, in his face a blended look of surprise and sudden concern, behind him as he neared the corner the slow purr of a taxi at that moment idling inward to the curb.

For a breathless instant their glances engaged, like rapier-points. Then with a lightning movement Vinson had raised his gun and fired twice, the double report blending as one. The policeman staggered, clutching at his heart, his face grayed; then in a slumping, sidewise fall he was down.

The taxi roared, a sudden, staccato clamor; the three at the curb sprang for its sheltering depths; it disappeared around the corner in a smother of dust.

Vinson had made his kill.

CHAPTER SIX

IN the House of the Cistern two white faces stared upward into impenetrable gloom. Travis and McAllister waited, as they had waited now for weeks, for that dread moment when the great leaves would open and the end would come upon them out of the night.

"I think it's coming, somehow, Jim," Travis's weak voice echoed in the gloom. "I feel it—it's—coming."

His voice ended in a cough. McAllister, of a hardier mould, spoke out of the corner of his mouth:

"Well, let it. Don't lose your nerve, old man! But I *did* think that time we heard the voice—it was Vinson's, wasn't it?—that we'd see the light. But I reckon we're out of luck. They got him and that was all."

For there were only the two; Vinson had been in error as to Gunson, for the latter had never been there. And now, as the voices died into silence, there came a creaking, a rasping; a trembling began and continued as of giant machinery moving, moving, with the inexorable, slow march of relentless doom.

"It's—*come!*"

In a moment now would be the end. Already a dim line of light showed just above; beneath them they could feel that iron floor shudder, give downward, an inch at a time, but downward, ever downward. The water, lapping beneath them like some hungry beast impatient for the sacrifice, rose now to a gurgling crescendo. The floor slanted at a still steeper pitch. A foot, an inch and, clawing desperately for hand-hold as they might, they would be hurled, as chaff is hurled, into the depths.

Vinson, returning to the chamber of the council, presented a stony face to the commendation of the clan. He was now free to come and go; he had proved his right to membership; their secrets were his; at any moment now they would be ripe for the gathering.

And the secrets were fearful ones; such indeed, if they were spoken from the housetops, as would convulse the world with unimagined fear and terror; secrets, after all, better locked deep in earth or in the muted tongues of dead men buried out of due time.

Now, as he left the chamber, passing outward as of right, he paused a moment under the pale stars, his face oddly contorted, mouth twisted in a crooked smile. A moment only he paused, then, at a rapid walk, was off along the street, doubling and turning, his head upon his shoulder, until, at the mouth of that dark alley leading to that house of fear, he paused again, sniffing up-wind like a pointer.

Against the night sky he could see the house, like a thing of evil, brooding upon the river bank like some unclean and monstrous bat. Then, at a light touch on his shoulder, he whirled.

They had arisen as from the ground, this little group of silent men, grim, hard-faced, unsmiling; one knew it even in the enveloping blackness cloaking them around as with a mantle of dreams.

Vinson spoke low:

"All set, boys," he told them. "Now, I'll lead the way."

But Vinson did not lead them to that manhole cover; instead, a dozen silent figures posted in the alley, the rest he led at a dog-trot around the corner and up to that great door, silent, between its shuttered windows.

A quick word, a whispered command, and of a sudden upon the black wall of the night there sprang a quick, shattering thunder as with pick-axe and maul they broke in the heavy door. Then in a flood they swept onward and across.

Men met them, to go down before the swinging blows of night-stick and granite fist; guns crashed, spitting the red death to right and left; swift justice followed the brief and bloody mêlée, with its handful of prisoners, white-faced, cowering, sullen, tight-lipped, herded against the wall.

But Vinson, three men at his back, hacked down a door at the far end of a corridor; it fell inward with a splintering crash, and there before them, seated in regal state before a fire of coals, they saw him at the last—the man who called himself Mong-Tsu, the man in a high place.

He faced them with a chill dignity which at the first they could not fathom. Then Vinson made one forward step, stooped, peered into that still, silent countenance.

He straightened, his face grim.

"Gone, boys," he told them, pointing to the empty vial on the table. "We're too late."

A moment he gazed at the dead man in his purple dressing-gown by the fire, then at a run had burst down a short flight of steps leading into thick darkness, the three men at his heels.

And even as they ran a suffocating fear

clutched at his heart: what if here, too, they might be—too late?

And then they heard it: the creaking, the clanking, as of ponderous and little-used machinery—a whirring as of invisible cables straining at the release.

Vinson covered the intervening space in one desperate, lurching, diving face downward, at that thrusting knob of metal; he reached, got one groping finger upon it, pressed downward upon it with all his strength.

For a moment, his heart in his mouth, he knew that it was touch and go. Then, before his eyes, the great leaf slowly opened, widening, lifting up—up.

Then from the void beneath he heard them: three feeble cheers, raised, as it might be, from the tomb.

In a room at police headquarters below the level of the street a patrolman in full uniform stood rigidly at attention before the rough, unfinished wall. Before him, sighting carefully along the barrel of his service pistol, a man in plain clothes aimed carefully for the officer's heart; there came the crash of the report; the patrolman gave back one single lurching step; then he steadied, grinning an expansive grin.

"I'll say that new armor is the goods, and then some," he told the man with the pistol.

Vinson smiled; then his gaze grew sombre. "Well, it's not the first time you've been a target, Charlie," he said. "But that first time —well, I confess I had my doubts and then some. For a moment I thought you'd left it off; it was too confounded realistic, that fall of yours. But that's all over now."

"Well, Greg, there's no hard feelings, of course, but when I got that message from Gunson—and it seems he'd been watched pretty close up to that, and he's some actor, I'll tell a man—hangin' out with that gang as a bona-fide member of a murder club, I'll say I had *my* doubts."

"I had to do it," repeated Vinson. "Otherwise I'd never have put it over. Well, it *was* a clean-up, thanks to Gunson and yourself; that deaf-and-dumb sign language is a wonderful invention, but I must say I didn't recognize our friend behind the mask at first."

He paused, his eyes alight with recollection.

"They sure did give us a battle in the council chamber, however," he continued, "but it's all over now; Travis and McAllister are out of the hospital; Jerry, they tell me, is on the mend; Mong-Tsu is only a memory."

His voice died; then once again he spoke, his expression grim:

"Little things and big ones, Charlie, and that cistern; it was certainly well named——"

"Hell's Hinges," finished Tomlinson for him with a twisted smile.

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THE SIAMESE A PECULIAR PEOPLE

THE Siamese are well formed, of medium height and olive complexion, somewhat darker than the Chinese. Their eyes are slightly oblique, their noses flat and prominent, and their faces wide across the cheek bones.

Most of the men wear small mustaches, but those that have latent beards pluck them out. They are Buddhists, and almost every man dons the yellow robe of the priest for a time.

There is no caste system, and the lowest born may attain the highest offices, if his capacity permits. There are no hereditary titles.

The Siamese believe that the arteries are filled with air, and that diseases are caused by deranged functioning of this air. After the birth of a child the mother has to lie thirty days roasting in front of a hot fire.

When a man gets sick he calls in a doctor and agrees with him on a fixed sum for a cure. If he dies, or fails to get well, the doctor gets nothing.

The dead are kept for from two days to nine months, depending on their rank in life, before they are cremated.

The Siamese language is a difficult tongue for a European to learn.

The Weight of Specie

"HOW many wagon loads of silver would those New York bankers get if they sell the treasury $10,000,000 worth of bonds and take their pay in subsidiary silver coin, as they are reported likely to do?" said the writer to an official of the mint bureau.

"Wagon loads, young man! You don't propose to measure $10,000,000 worth of silver by wagon loads, do you?"

"Why not?"

"Because there is too much of it. A wagon load would not figure in calculating the weight of $10,000,000 in silver."

"How much would $1,000,000 of it weigh?"

"Only twenty-seven tons," was the smiling reply. "If it was in silver dollars it would weigh thirty tons, but in subsidiary silver coin it would weigh twenty-seven tons and a little over—twenty-seven and a half tons in round numbers."

"How does it come that subsidiary coin weighs less to the dollar than the silver dollars?"

"The subsidiary silver coin used to be exactly equal to the dollar. This is to say, two fifty-cent pieces or four quarters originally weighed the same as one silver dollar; but away back in the fifties a slight change was made in the weight of the dollar, and of the subsidiary coin also, and when the dollar was changed back to its present standard the subsidiary coin was not changed."

"Then, according to your figures, it would require something more than a horse and cart to transport the $10,000,000 of half-dollars, quarters and dimes to New York in case the New York bankers came down with their $10,000,000 of bonds and took small change in pay for them, as they are likely to do."

"Well, slightly. The $10,000,000 of silver would weigh 275 tons, which means, of course, 27 carloads. A pretty good freight train that would be, with 27 cars loaded with silver."

"And suppose it were in dollars?"

"Then the $10,000,000 would weigh 300 tons instead of 275, and would add two or three more cars to the train."

"Suppose the $10,000,000 were in gold instead of silver, what would it weigh then?"

"About 37,000 pounds, or, in a general way, it would make two carloads. One million dollars in gold coin weighs 3,686 pounds, while in silver dollars, as I have said, it weighs 30 tons."

"Suppose they were to take their ten millions in nickels, how much would it weigh then?"

"Well, $1,000 in nickels would weigh 220 pounds. At that rate $1,000,000 would weigh 220,000 pounds, so that by a brief calculation you will find that to transport $10,000,000 in nickels it would take a train of cars numbering considerably over 100, or, in other words, a train about half a mile long."

"And to follow this interesting question to its last step, what is the weight of $1,000 or $1,000,000 in pennies?"

"The weight of $1,000 in pennies is 685 pounds, and $1,000,000, of course, would be 685,000 pounds. To transport $10,000,000 in pennies would require about 350 cars, or make a train a couple of miles long."

Just below the windows of the mint bureau is a large asphalt surface, looking like a section of Pennsylvania avenue, which has bobbed up in the area inside of the treasury building. It is the upper surface of the covering of the huge vault built some years ago for the deposit of silver dollars and other coin held by the treasury department.

HAUNTING EYES

BY

JACK J. GOTTLIEB

THOUGH soft and gentle moonbeams mellowed the hazy tint of the night, there was a chill in the air—a chill raw and bleak. The man lurking in the narrow doorway of the back street drew shiveringly into his shabby clothes. He was cold, colder than he had been before he discarded his prison garments for the stolen suit he now wore.

He looked wretched and seedy, but he was not one to draw pity upon himself. A close observer would have noticed that his eyes contained a threatening gleam as keen as the stars above, while the tautened, ferocious expression on his thin face argued a vulturous purpose. Prison pallor was in his cheeks, and his lean nose dilated in a way suggestive of a cur about to bite. Smith Johnson, recently escaped from the State penitentiary and for whose capture notice of a reward of $500 had been offered, was of the lowest type of humanity.

From somewhere to the east there came the tolling of a church clock. Like a rat from its hole Johnson peered out; his eyes traveled up and down the still street. A figure, burly and stolid, turned the corner and moved up the street, and Johnson ducked back into the gloom.

"A flatfoot!" he muttered, with scowling lips. "A flatfoot an' no mistake. I know 'em a mile off. Bet all of 'em's been told I've broken out by now, and the whole force is lookin' for me."

He gritted his teeth in a snarl. The vengeful look in his eyes intensified.

"But they won't get me; they won't get me; I'll see to that. I'm not a broken old man. They won't get me before I get that Judge Thorpe. They'll *never* get me."

He waited until the roundsman had disappeared, then, assured of no danger, stole down the street in the opposite direction. His torn slouch hat he pulled low over his eyes. Though he moved briskly, he hugged the shadows as though they were to him liberty itself, as indeed they were. He had a purpose in view—a purpose for which he had broken jail, and he was determined not to be easily retaken.

As he moved rapidly along towards a section of the city where less filth and poverty abounded, he allowed his mind to relax. He was thinking of vengeance, and extremely sweet to him was the thought of it. Contrary to the belief of the police, he had not broken jail merely because he valued freedom. Liberty, of course, was dear, but revenge was infinitely dearer to him. It was all-possessing. It possessed him as much as fear does a coward, as hate a feudist.

And it had all started with a laugh.

Smith Johnson had been arraigned in court on charges of robbery and shooting with intent to kill. The charges were true, but Smith Johnson, on advice of his shyster mouthpiece, had kept his mouth shut about it. The trial progressed nicely, until Judge Thorpe, the presiding jurist, rose and declared Johnson to be entirely guilty.

"Therefore," Judge Thorpe had pompously concluded, "I sentence you to from twelve to twenty years in the State penitentiary."

It was a hard blow. Johnson had expected to be let off scot-free. So, after recovering from the amazement of the judge's sudden verdict, he started to protest.

"Take the prisoner to his cell," Judge Thorpe had sternly commanded.

And then Johnson had become vociferously indignant. While three officers were struggling to remove him from the court-room, he had shrieked to the judge:

"I'll get you yet."

And Judge Thorpe had laughed.

That laugh, Johnson now grimly decided, was going to cost Thorpe his life.

In the prison cell, in the prison workshop, on the prison cot where he lay awake at nights, he had thought about that laugh. From the very beginning it had hurt him to the quick. It was more than a hurt; it outraged him beyond expression. It was salt to the wound of what he considered an injustice. It goaded him beyond endurance. If Judge Thorpe hadn't laughed Smith Johnson would not have even thought of revenge.

The streets stretched quietly to the north and south, to the east and west, gloomy despite the half-moon and the tall arc-lights. The air had become colder, but though it stung him unmercifully, he paid no heed. His mind was on fire with the immensity of his problem.

Presently he reached Grant street and began scanning the house numbers as he shuffled past. Ahead the street was silent and deserted; in the quiet glow of the moon was visible a stretch of tall, stately buildings, glimmering windows, impeccable asphalt, smooth pavements. The yellow shine of the street lamps gave the avenue a weird aspect.

He had made it his business, after escaping jail, to learn the address of Judge Thorpe's home. It was 3721 West Grant street. From a hidden nook he had spotted the house two days before, much as a cat views the cage which houses the canary. He had found it to be an old stone residence, pretentious in its dignity, and surrounded by a large garden enclosed by a low, ivy-clad wall.

And so, when he reached 3721, hesitation played no part in his execution. Johnson had mapped out his plan beforehand. He sprang up and grasped the capstone of the wall, bending low so that his form might not be outlined against the sky, and scrambled into the garden. In the darkness he paused long enough to quietly unbolt the gate, in case later flight in that direction became necessary. Then he stole quickly towards the rear of the house, avoiding by aid of the moonlight the innumerable bushes, shrubs and trees, and aware as he did so of a single lighted window toward the front of the great house.

With a swift dexterity that told of a skilled hand, he forced the basement window and leaped into the impenetrably dark, musty cellar with almost feline grace. The flickering of a match guided him to the steps, up which he crept slowly. Noiselessly he opened the kitchen door and in another minute he was stooping in the gloom of the dining chamber, listening with keen attention.

An automatic found its way into his hand.

In the main hall a light burned. Johnson, looking out through the open door of the dining-room, was aware that the door of the library was open, and that tobacco smoke came from the lighted room. Both the smoke and the light argued a presence. A hope, feverish in its vehemence, took hold of him: If only that presence was Judge Thorpe!

Cat-like, he moved into the hallway. He was glad of the muffling quality of the rugs; they deadened his foot-falls. Careful that he cast no shadow on the opposite wall, he crouched low behind the tapestries. He could now see the solitary occupant seated at a desk, perusing a paper, his large round head bent forward in thoughtful concern. The face was repulsive; coarse it was, and thick and ugly; and there was a perpetual leer about the watery eyes, and a forceful ruddiness in the thick cheeks.

Through Johnson there flooded a feeling of elation. It was the judge!

He studied the seated figure briefly. What hate, what loathing, what malevolence he felt for that figure!

And then, quietly, he stepped into the room.

Judge Thorpe started and cast an amazed glance at the intruder. Then his eyes took on a deadly glint; he arose tartly—but only to shrink back, scowling. For the missile of death in the tense right hand of the intruder was pointed straight at his heart!

"Not a sound, now!" hissed Johnson, advancing. "No tricks. Don't open your yap. If you do I'll——"

"Who—what do you want?" gasped the judge.

"Quiet, blast you! Sit down. I'll put this gat in my pocket, but understand I'll have you covered." He suited the action to the word. "Now! Do you know who I am?"

Judge Thorpe sneered.

"I don't know one crook from another. If it's money you want, I'm sorry to say——"

"Not so loud! Yes, I'm a crook, but I ain't here on business. It's pleasure with me—see? I'm Smith Johnson!"

On the rustic countenance of the jurist there appeared a frown, as though he were wondering where he had heard that name before.

"Smith Johnson!" the marauder repeated, straining forward. "The man whose trial you busted up two years ago. The man you sent to jail without a chance to state his case. Justice you call that, an' you a judge! Bah! I said I'd get you, an' I meant it. I broke prison to keep that promise, an' here I am!"

His breath was hot on Thorpe's cheek. His voice had taken on a triumphant ring. The fat face of the judge grew the color of chalk.

"But I thought——" he began.

"Thought I had drowned?" Johnson laughed coarsely. A fine liar you are, judge! Don't try to put that trick over on me, 'cause I ain't the bloke the bulls take me to be. I read that article too, an' believe me I can read through it as easy as mud. They thought they could put me off my guard by printin' that they had found the drowned body of the escaped convict, Smith Johnson. Well, I'm wise."

"What do you want?" Judge Thorpe asked sharply.

For a moment there was silence. The two men looked into each other's eyes. Johnson into the steely blue of Thorpe's, and the judge into the brown, venomous ones of Johnson. Neither gaze faltered.

A sense of revulsion swept through Johnson.

"Do you know what I'm going to do?" he whispered harshly. "I'm going to kill you."

Judge Thorpe paled; but other than that, and a narrowing of his eyelids, there was no change in his aspect. Then, like a rat in its trap, he looked about. Johnson noted that glance—gloated over it. For two years he had thought about and waited for this moment. He drew out his pistol.

"I'm going to count three," he said, "and then I'm going to plug you!"

He paused to see what effect his announcement had on Thorpe. Then

"One!"

Judge Thorpe sat rigid. His eyes roved restlessly. But in his stony face there was no indication of the tumult that raged within.

"Two!" The intonation was somehow strained and unnatural.

Judge Thorpe drew a deep, gathering breath.

"Thr-e——"

But even before Johnson had time to finish the pronunciation of the word Judge Thorpe, in one furious lurch, had hurled himself forward and snatched at the pistol.

Johnson snarled—cursed. He endeavored to pull the weapon away, but he was not quick enough. The burly form of his antagonist, surprisingly animate, had pinioned his right arm against his body.

There followed a brief struggle. In a tangle of legs and clutching hands they surged together. Titanic shadows swayed on the walls and floor to the movement of their straining bodies. Bestial oaths arose—angry invectives. And then, with a wrench, Judge Thorpe managed to get the pistol.

But though the heavier, the judge was not the stronger. A pampered life had given him soft and flabby muscles, while the muscles of Johnson were like steel, harder than the bones in his lithe body. And so, even as the judge grasped the pistol, Johnson's flinty fingers closed about his wrist, slowly forcing the muzzle of the gun towards Thorpe himself.

With a supreme effort the judge tried to

turn the weapon away, but failed. It had now become a struggle of arms and hands only, and Johnson was regaining the upper hand.

As Thorpe's crushed fingers pressed against the trigger, there was a loud report. The struggle ceased. Judge Thorpe reeled backwards. His right hand twitched—released the pistol, which clattered to the floor. A crimson daub was visible in the center of his forehead. He screamed; his knees sagged, and he fell lifeless, his fingers still holding the pistol.

Johnson drew away. He was trembling. He had not reckoned upon the struggle, and though he had come out the victor it affected him strangely. Try as he would, he could not shake off this feeling of repulsion. But he tensed himself with the realization that there was no time to be lost. He must get out of the house as soon as possible.

Yet even before he turned to go a sudden unknown sense warned him—a keen premonition, tugging at his heart-strings, told him of peril. And of a sudden he was conscious that he was not the only living person in the room.

With an inarticulate cry he whirled about. His glaring eyes rested on the small form that stood in the doorway.

It was a woman with flowing white hair and face even whiter. She was very old, and there was terror in her face and a panicky fright in her eyes. For the moment she did not appear to notice Johnson, but stared down at the fallen form of the judge with an expression of horror. And then, slowly, she lifted her eyes to Johnson's.

In a moment he knew that the expression of those eyes would haunt him to the end of his days. There was such suffering and terror and appeal in them that they held him transfixed. He could do nothing but stare and stare at them, deep-set as they were, in a face white with misery. Within him there was a feeling of sharp physical sickness; he felt as if he could neither move nor speak.

But at length a sense of self-preservation rasped through the crook, and with an effort he tore his eyes from those of the old lady's. Swiftly he rushed past her, into the dining-room and back to the kitchen. He breathed with relief when he had found his way out.

Weird thoughts passed through his mind, and he remembered the odd fact that he had not heard the old woman utter a single sound. He wondered if she was dumb.

"Strange," he murmured as he hurried along; "those eyes—they made me think of—my mother."

There was a strong wind; a frost had settled in, but Smith Johnson did not feel cold now.

By the following morning the memory of those eyes had become less vivid, and Johnson began to be concerned about his own safety. Some one had seen him commit the murder—some one who (judging by the terror she had shown) was very near to the murdered man, and there was no doubt that the police would recognize the identity of the guilty man by the old lady's description.

There would then be a nation-wide search for him; railroad stations and docks would be closely watched, telegrams would be despatched all over the country, every patrolman in every county of every State would be given a description of one Smith Johnson.

He remembered having once read of an ingenious-minded criminal who had hovered about the scene of his crime for quite a time, and long after, when the search for him had been let up, he had escaped.

Why couldn't *he* do the same?

Since his escape Johnson boarded in a sort of criminal-infested hostelry in the underworld, the proprietor of which was himself an ex-convict, who let out rooms only to lawbreakers. His room was situated in the midst of more than a score of other such rooms. Small and ugly it was, and furnished with a cot, washstand and chair.

As a first step in his plan, Johnson called the proprietor to his room very early the next morning.

"Listen, Hans," he said. "I pulled off a little job that had my trade-mark on it last night, an' now there'll be a renewed search for me. What I intend doin' is stick to this room for three or four months. Now, don't look surprised. I mean it. What I want you to do is this: Have my breakfast, dinner an' supper brought up to me every day in the week, until I think the time is ripe to make a getaway. The money for you will be comin' regular."

It was to be a battle between the law and

himself, and he prided himself that he had an edge on the law. Does not the side of the offense usually have the heavier task?

He picked up a book and started to read. But he found that the stuff did not now interest him as it usually did. The lines blurred together, and he tossed the book away with disgust.

Then he began pacing the floor. Save for the grumbling of the warped woodwork beneath his footsteps, the room was very quiet. He wondered what that strange, superfluous something was which occupied his brain—that something altogether foreign to his nature. What—who could he be thinking of? Could it be——? Yes, there was no doubt of it, he was thinking of the old lady.

Strange how a thing like that should force itself upon his mind. He tried to thrust the thought of it from himself, but it persisted. He laughed—then started. It was his laughter, he realized, that had startled him. It was harsh and unnatural.

Again he laughed, and again he started. He suddenly felt a curious sensation dart through his nerves. Odd, his feeling like this. He had never felt this way before.

He did not know that he paced the floor for fully an hour before he sat down on the edge of his cot and stared unseeingly ahead. And he had barely touched the cot than he was on his feet again, moving restlessly.

What was it that was affecting him so queerly?

Of a sudden he knew. It was the memory of the old lady's eyes.

He seemed to see them looking at him, staring at him so wistfully, and the recollection of their heart-rending terror touched him to the quick. God! but she must have been hurt! If appearances counted for aught, the horror of seeing and hearing the firing of the shot that killed the one she loved was worse than if the pistol had been directed at her own heart.

But what nonsense was he thinking of! He must forget this bosh; he could not afford to begin the seclusion of a few months pondering over a bad dream. He must make his long stay in the room as bearable as possible.

He was glad he had taken a room with a window facing the street; at least he would not have to forego *all* contact with the outside world. The window was shuttered, but through the rather wide slit between the two boards he could see enough of the street to satisfy his longing. For a time he watched the pedestrians as they flitted across his vision, his mind but dimly occupied, his sub-consciousness filled with the thought of a certain pair of haunting eyes.

And then his own eyes bulged, and his nostrils dilated.

For, leaning against the post on the corner, chewing a cigar, was Frank Walton! Walton was the detective who had captured Johnson, and whose evidence had been so overwhelming that Judge Thorpe had seen fit to order the jury to find Johnson guilty.

As if a snake had bitten him, Johnson bounded back into the farthest corner of the room, quivering like a leaf. Fear seized upon him. The presence of Walton in the underworld could mean but one thing: he was on the lookout for some one. And who could that some one be, if not—Smith Johnson!

He crouched against the wall, panting. His safety was in jeopardy. Perhaps Walton was even now waiting for a force of policemen, so that he could batter in the door, raid the boarding-house, and uncover the fugitive. He groaned again.

But at length he roused himself and tried to pluck up courage. Perhaps, after all, Walton was there for another purpose. It couldn't be possible that the police had hit upon his hiding place so soon. He decided that he would call the proprietor, who knew much about the *modus operandi* of the police, and see what he could learn.

But the individual he called snorted when he discovered what was in Johnson's mind.

"Rats!" he averred disgustedly. "Don't be a fool. If he had anything on, he wouldn't be standing there smoking so peacefully. You needn't be afeared. They're never so far away as when they're near."

But Johnson felt far from reassured.

"Will you bring me a paper, Hans?" he asked. "I want to do some readin'."

It was after one when the newspaper was brought. Johnson had just finished a cold mid-day meal, and it had unexpectedly dampened his already flagging spirits. As his eye

rested on the sheet he gasped incredulously. For he read in bold black type:

JUDGE THORPE COMMITS SUICIDE

Well-known Jurist Kills Self After Series of Secret Business Reversals.

He glared at the paper as though hardly believing his sense of sight. For a moment there was oppressive stillness, then suddenly he knew what it meant. The police were resorting to a subterfuge in order to catch him unawares. Judge Thorpe had not committed suicide, and the police knew it.

The realization sent him into the depths of despair. For the first time in his life he knew the real magnanimity of the law. The law controlled newspapers; it could make them print lies; and newspapers were truly great.

Snarling, testy thoughts gripped him. His mind grew feverish. Many lines wreathed themselves on his face. There was an insistent drumming and pounding in his brain, in his ears, in every nerve and fibre.

Slowly, with legs that trembled and feet that stumbled at every step, he moved to the cot and flung himself on it.

And then—calm. He had fallen asleep.

Or—had he? Was this really a dream? Was the old lady with the wide-haunting eyes really a figment of his overwrought brain, or was it real?

Why did she point a finger of accusation at him and say—"You are the murderer!" How could she speak, if she were dumb. No, it could not be her voice. They were really not words, but the snarls of a sardonic charge. "You are the murderer!—you are the murderer!—and you will be caught!"

Who uttered these last words? Could it be Walton? Yes, it was Walton! The leering face of him was contorted to a degree, and his scowling lips mouthed the words—"You will be caught!"

Johnson awoke in a cold sweat. The hammering in his brain had greatly increased. It was dark. A thought came to him: It would be useless to try to outwit justice. Better to have it over with than this racking suspense.

And so he jumped from bed and tore the door open. As he dashed down the stairs a million taunting devils seemed to follow—hideously contorted faces grinned at him around the corner of every turn. He had no way of knowing that already it was midnight; he was unaware of the fact that the streets were almost entirely deserted. He rushed blindly onward.

A tumult raged within his heart, and it seemed as though he would never reach his destination. But he stumbled ahead blindly, stubbornly. Nor did he stop once until he had reached police headquarters.

The chief looked up sharply as he caught sight of a wild-eyed, wild-faced man tottering into the station. While two bluecoats held Johnson up he looked questioningly into the crook's terror-revealing, death-white face. Then a light of recognition broke across his own countenance.

"Smith Johnson, by all that's holy!" he exclaimed.

"Yes—I'm—Smith Johnson." The fugitive's voice was a panting whisper. "I—I've come to—give myself up."

"Why, we thought you were at the bottom of the river," said the chief.

A weak smile flitted across Johnson's face.

"Don't—fool me—like that," he begged pitously. "I'm giving myself up. I killed Judge Thorpe!"

"You—*what!*"

"I—killed Judge Thorpe. Please—don't look at me—that way. You know it—well enough."

The chief stared.

"But Judge Thorpe committed suicide."

"Don't fool me, chief," Johnson begged in a whining voice. "You couldn't trick me by the papers. The old lady—the judge's mother, I think she is—saw me——"

"*Saw you?*" The chief laughed uproariously. "Anyway, thanks for the confession, Johnson. "So the judge was murdered, after all."

"Why——" began Johnson, his voice a murmur.

"Well," said the chief, "it was Mrs. Thorpe herself who testified that she *heard* the judge commit suicide. As for seeing *you*—my, what a joke. The poor old lady *couldn't* see you, Johnson. She's as blind as a bat."

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

Emergencies For Lawyers

IN commercial crises lawyers have to do a good deal of quick work in putting business affairs in shape to meet an emergency. The bankrupt generally desires to save parts of the wreck for this or that creditor, or for relatives, or for himself, and the papers must be drawn in due form to elude the vigilance of the unfortunate creditors who get left. Bankruptcy business has become a special branch of law, and there are some lawyers who have become very expert at it, so that upon short notice and with brief time in which to work they can arrange the affairs of a bankrupt firm so as to dispose of the assets according to the wishes of their clients.

There is room and need for quick wit in the actual trial of cases in court. It is one thing to prepare a case with careful consideration of the facts and due application of the law to those facts. It is quite another thing to be able to handle a case in open court under the spur of competition with sharp opposing counsel or a testy court. In every large law firm the work is divided like that in a factory, and to each is assigned a particular part of the case. The one who tries it must be a man of rapid judgment and resources. He must be able to meet surprises, to discern men, to divine hidden motives, to snap at the prejudices of jurors or judges, and to seize the advantages of the moment. There is no end of need for quick wit in questions of identity. In an extradition case, which depended entirely upon identity, the defendant had been fully identified. The defendant's counsel slyly got his client to change his coat in court with another man of similar appearance, and within a few minutes the witness was led easily to identify the wrong man.

A quick-witted and daring Western lawyer once saved a guilty client from sure conviction on a charge of poisoning. It was proved that the poisoning had been done by means of certain cakes, a portion of which was produced in court. When the counsel for the prisoner had finished his speech he said:

"And these, gentlemen of the jury, are some of the alleged poisoned cakes. We declare to you, gentlemen of the jury, that these are not poisoned cakes. They are as harmless cakes as ever were made, and in order, gentlemen of the jury, to show you that these cakes are not poisoned, I will eat one of them right here in your presence."

And he did eat one. He took good care, however, to leave the room at the earliest opportunity and to make a bee-line for an adjoining room, where he had an emetic in readiness and an antidote. But the jury never heard about the emetic or the antidote until the lawyer's client had been acquitted.

On another occasion a witness had been detailing with great minuteness certain conversations which had occurred several years before. Again and again the witness testified to names and dates, and precise words, and it became necessary for his cross-examiner to break him up. This was done by a very simple device. While the witness was glibly rattling off his testimony the cross-examiner handed him a law book, and said:

"Read aloud a paragraph from that book."

"What for?" inquired the witness.

"I will tell you after you have read it," said the lawyer, and the witness accordingly read aloud a paragraph of most uninteresting matter about lands, appurtenances, and hereditaments. Then the lawyer went on and asked him a few more questions about his memory, and the witness was positive that his memory was very good. Suddenly the lawyer asked:

"By the way, will you please repeat that paragraph you just read about lands, appurtenances and hereditaments?"

"Why, of course I could not do that," replied the witness.

"You must have a queer memory," retorted the lawyer, "since you can repeat things that

you say occurred years ago, and you cannot repeat what you read a moment ago."

The witness was nonplused, and the jury was obviously amused at his discomfiture.

A quick-witted lawyer thinks on full gallop. Many successful cross-examiners have been men who could keep up a running fire of jokes and comments and never lose sight of the main point, who could lead a witness along by suavity and politeness and acquiescence and apparent obsequious deference into pitfalls of contradiction. Such men will let a smart witness talk on until he drops some unfortunate expression that subjects him to being pounced upon and demolished at one fell swoop.

A leading counsel for the defendant in an accident damage case, where the injury had been occasioned by a jet of steam scalding the complainant's back and neck as he was driving past the defendant's place, argued to the jury that plaintiff was guilty of contributory negligence, and should have looked up to avoid the accident. The quick-witted counsel for the complainant retorted: "Oh, no; if he had looked up, instead of suing for damage to the back of our head, we should have had to charge you for the loss of both eyes."

In a trial for murder, where the killing was done by shooting, the counsel for defendant made a good deal of fuss and introduced a quantity of medical testimony to show that the wounded man had been unskillfully treated. At the close of a confusing cross-examination by defendant's counsel on the length of the probe used to find the ball, the direction of the wound, and the danger of probing, the district attorney put the question very tersely by asking: "Doctor, was it the probing or the shooting that caused death?"

In the trial for burglary the people's witness showed that he was on watch in the hall, when he heard some one fumbling with the lock of the door, and that he then slyly turned the knob so that the thief could come in easily. The glib-tongued lawyer for the prisoner at once said: "Why, your honor, this witness was the real burglar, for it was he and not my client that really opened the door." The result of this timely remark was that the prisoner got off with a light sentence for an attempt at burglary.

BABY IN WELL SAVED BY VOICE OF MOTHER

THE quiet, soothing tones of his mother, who controlled her frantic terror to save her child's life, kept little Elwood Hart calm and steady on the rotten fragment of an old well-top which had fallen with him to within a foot of deep and icy water at Moorestown, N. J. A sudden movement of the baby, two and a half years old, would have wrenched his precarious bench loose from the well walls where it happened to stick as boy and boards plunged down.

"Keep still, Elwood, and Mr. Murphy will come right down and get you," Mrs. Elwood forced herself to say. "Now, don't move or you will fall off and get all wet."

"All right, mother, I won't move. It's awful cold down here."

From the door of her home Mrs. Frank S. Hart had seen the child disappear into the long-abandoned and almost-forgotten well. Its wooden top, moss-grown, was little different from the surrounding grass. Elwood jumped on it in childish play.

He disappeared. Mrs. Hart, realizing she must hurry, saw Thomas J. Murphy in his garden next-door and called him. The child was barely visible sixteen feet below the ground as they peered in, but he was crying. Murphy started to climb down, but Mrs. Hart halted him for an instant to talk with her baby.

Elwood stopped weeping at sound of his mother's voice. She told him Mr. Murphy was coming down after him.

"I'm here, mother, and I want to go home," Elwood replied. As Murphy cautiously descended with hands and knees braced against the walls, Mrs. Hart kept up her quiet talk with the boy. Murphy reached him, brought him to the surface and gave him to his mother, damp but unharmed.

THE HOUSEBREAKER

BY

WILL A. WILKINSON

CHAPTER ONE

A SHARP, whistling wind, bleak and marrow-piercing, swept up from off the bay, penetrating the thin, shabby clothing of the slight, hollow-chested, shifty-eyed young chap who hurried along dingy Pollard street.

The badly-worn summer Oxfords on the man's feet were soaked and soggy with dampness, and his narrow shoulders hunched and shivered from the biting keenness of the air, while his lean neck was drawn deep down in the scanty protection afforded by the turned-up collar of his faded coat.

He shoved his way through the front door of a shabby restaurant mid-way of the block, slamming it shut after him with a bang.

"Say, did you ever try airin' this dump?" he growled at the flannel-shirted waiter who shuffled out from somewhere in the rear.

"Well, well, well! Look who's here!" exclaimed the unoffended "hasher" in surprised tones as he obtained a good look at his crabby customer. "Fingers Magee! Huh! How are you, Fingers, old-timer? Ain't seen much of you round here lately. How come? An' say, 'fore I forgit it, that bull McCorkel's been in here two or three times lately askin' 'bout you."

"Th' devil he has! Say what he wanted?"

"I supposed that'd be 'bout th' first thing that bird'd do—loosen up about his business, but he didn't say. Just quizzed around a bit. Didn't make him round-shouldered to carry what information he got here, though," and the waiter grinned sagaciously.

"Thanks, Mike. Gimme some ham and eggs an' a stack o' wheat cakes—an' say, tell that ninth-rate chef o' yourn not t' turn them eggs over this time, see? Straight up for mine. Make it snappy, now! I'm half starved!"

"Snappy's th' word, Fingers, leastwise on my part, though I ain't answerin' for th' cook."

Jimmie Magee, more commonly called "Fingers" by the police and other bosom companions, planted one pointed elbow upon the counter top, rested the end of his narrow chin in the cupped palm of his slim hand and peered out meditatively at the waves of sleet and snow that tapped and pecked against the glass. The screech of the storm caused him to shrug his shoulders and scowl up at the dreary drabness of the sky above.

"There ain't nothin' to it; I just got t' unload my swag to-day! I'll freeze stiff as an icicle in these rags! Got to have a new outfit, that's settled! If that blood-suckin' old fence

loosens up like he ought to, it's me for th' sunny South on th' first outbound rattler! Ugh! I got a bellyful of these snowballs already!"

As he gulped his food the man seemed wrapped in deep thought; but by the time he had finished a look of decision was evident in his air. He slipped from his seat, scraped a few loose coins from the depths of his pockets to square his bill, lighted a hand-rolled cigarette and passed out into the bluster of the storm-swept street.

His wet, hurrying feet soon brought him to the street entrance of a gloomy, musty stairway that ascended to the cheap lodging-house owned and conducted by one "Mother" Martin. It occupied the upper floor of a two-storied house in an alley. He mounted the creaking stairs and, groping his way along a mussy, ill-smelling hallway, finally paused at the far end to admit himself to a cheerless, untidy, crib-like room overlooking the alley. It was meanly furnished with a tumble-down bed, a brace of rickety straight-back chairs and ancient washstand with bowl and pitcher. On the wall hung a blotched and cracked mirror that hideously distorted any object it was called upon to reflect. The place reeked with the dead fumes of cigarettes.

With the prudence of the habitual criminal he took pains to throw the door bolt as he entered, and, sinking upon the edge of the bed, he sat gazing abstractedly at the patched and worn carpet on the rough flooring. For almost a fortnight, in this tiny chamber, Fingers Magee had crouched in hiding, venturing out only when the pangs of hunger drove him to the procurement of food. He was cringing and timorously apprehensive that, sooner or later, the strong arm of the law would ferret him from his burrow and drag him to the bar of justice to answer for his many willful violations of the law.

Fingers could not help but review with pride the success that crowned his nocturnal endeavors at the palatial residence of Thaddeus Joyce, a retired captain of finance, out in the silk-stocking colony of Sheridan Heights. For it was during this particular pilgrimage that he had acquired possession of what looked like a necklace of perfect-cut, lustrously polished sapphires. They belonged to the socially prominent Mrs. Thaddeus. He fondly hoped to realize a comfortable winter "stake" on this haul. The article of adornment in question had been his sole acquisition on this pillaging venture, save a trifling amount of cash from the pockets of the head of the household. A real or fancied threat of interruption had sent him scurrying in flight before he had an opportunity for a more thorough exploration of the premises. But he felt amply repaid for his risk and labor; the flashing "bauble" danced before the thief's eyes in his slumbers. Fingers was a cautious scamp, however, and badly as he needed money, he had resolutely frowned down upon the seductive temptation to "unload" the treasure at too early a date. The risk was enormous until time had permitted the excitement of the robbery to die down somewhat. It had always been one of his rules never to assume needless hazard in any of his nefarious undertakings. Mayhap that was why he had for so long been successful in eluding arrest and conviction in the pursuit of his shady line of endeavor. "Safety first" had ever been Fingers's chief slogan.

But the time had come at last when conditions must change and for the better. He was badly in need of funds, and it had ceased to be altogether a question of personal security; it was now, "how to raise ready cash." An unlooked-for cold snap was already at hand, and the rascal was in dire need of proper raiment with which to clothe his anemic body from the chill blasts and wherewithal to square for his bed and board. Indeed, the time was at hand when he must act.

He arose from the complaining old bed and glided with quick movement across the room to the door of a small closet on the opposite side. But this he did not open. Instead he fished from his pocket a heavy knife and, unclasping the larger blade, inserted it behind the ornamental header-block at the top of one of the casing boards and pulled the square of wood from its place. With a grunt of satisfaction he groped a slender hand into the tiny recess thus revealed and drew forth an object wrapped in soft white tissue paper, which he fingered gingerly. Dragging up a chair to the washstand, he pushed back the grimy bowl and pitcher and spread the packet open before him. The eyes of the crook gloated and

blazed with the fires of avariciousness as they were met by a scintillating burst of color, ravishing, wondrous. He bent to drink in once more the fascinating loveliness of the necklace of blue sapphires, intermingled with red, veritable triumphs of the lapidary's skill. They twinkled and blinked up at him with magnetic lure, and the long, slender fingers of the man trembled violently as he allowed the rope of jewels to trickle through them repeatedly. His breath sucked through his yellowed teeth with a sibilant sound.

"Some beauty!" he breathed. "And old Jan Van Dam's going t' slip me at least five thou. before he gits his dirty paws upon it, I'm tellin' th' whole world!"

With tenderest of care he re-wrapped the treasure in its paper and placed the package carefully away in an inner pocket in preparation to quit the room.

"Guess I'd better roll a smoke 'fore I start out," he mused. "Too blasted cold on th' fingers outside."

As he stood twirling his cigarette his ever-restless eyes roved aimlessly about, and suddenly he gave a quick start as, in their wanderings, they settled upon an object on the floor by the window on the far side of the room. A few quick strides brought him to the thing, and snatching it up, he stood regarding it with a puzzled look stamped upon his face. It was an almost full-length lead pencil of a bright yellow, pointedly sharpened and with nickeled pocket clip. The crook's thin lips puckered musingly, and he began whistling softly to himself the while his black eyes, darting and uneasy, took in the whole of the apartment with swift, comprehensive glances. Fingers was prompt to recognize the article as being no property of his.

A faint noise from the hall caught his ever-alert ear, and in a flash he had gained the door and jerked it open. A slovenly old woman, with worn-out broom in hand, was shuffling down the passageway, raspingly humming an ancient tune.

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Martin! Just a moment!" sang out Fingers, halting her and extending the pencil. "This must be yours, eh? Dropped it in my room when you was cleanin' up, you understand." There was questioning inflection to his tone, a flavor of interrogation, of suspicion, possibly of appeal.

"Sure, an' it's nothin' av th' kind at all, Jimmie Magee!" croaked the aged slattern with a cackling laugh. "An' it's well ye know, ye young blackguard, that poor ol' Kate Martin kin just manage her own humble *sig*-nature, no more. So why th' divil should Oi be after spendin' me hard-earned money on sich rubbish as a pincil, Oi don't know!"

"You're right, Katie. Better freeze onto your jack; hooch is goin' t' be high this winter. "You don't want t' go without your little 'shot' now an' then," and he grinned as he caught the smell of alcohol on her breath. "But say, any one up t' see me while I was out? Any one in my room, Katie?"

"Aw, go on with th' foolish questions ye be after askin' this mornin', Jimmie Magee!" growled the old woman. "An' how, pray tell me, could any one git inter your room, an' you an' me havin' th' only two keys? Oi haven't been in there meself yet this blissid mornin', although Oi did have it in mind to slick your room up a bit as soon as Oi git through with th' one across th' hall."

"All right, Katie; all right. No matter. I was kinda expectin' a guy up t' see me on business; but I guess he ain't showed yet. If he comes while I'm out, tell him t' stick around a bit. I won't be gone long!" And the rogue moved toward the stairway leading to the street.

"It's funny!" he muttered. "If it's th' guy I think it is, he wouldn't need no key nor nothin'. That pencil got there somehow, and I know *I* didn't fetch it! Darned queer! I don't just understand it, unless——"

His never lagging steps carried him quite a distance before pausing at last in front of a small establishment in a somewhat more pretentious district than the one he had recently quitted. The contents of the display window alone would have betrayed the character of the place, even to the least sophisticated, without the sign in peeling, ragged gold leaf on the front glass: "Jan Van Dam, Loans." Not stopping to cast more than a casual glance over the front of the store, the crook reached for the latch and stepped quickly inside.

A sharp-featured young man of thirty or so came briskly forward from the rear of the

room upon his entrance, and beholding the newcomer, he sang out:

"Why, hello, Jimmie Fingers! How are you?"

"Hey! Soft pedal the gab, Jakie. Where is Jan—back?" and the visitor nodded inquiringly toward a door which had the single word, "Private," painted in plain black letters upon the frosted glass panel.

"Yep. But he may be busy now and can't see you right away. Wait a minute and I'll see," and the clerk disappeared from view only to pop out instantly and beckon the visitor to enter the rear office.

Humped over a desk in a small, fairly well-furnished room fitted up as a private den was a medium-tall, thin, round-shouldered old man of pronounced Dutch countenance. His skin was yellowed like aged parchment, seamed and lined with a network of countless tiny wrinkles. Hair, that had once been jet black, fringed around the glossy baldness of a huge head; a thin, straggly beard, once dark as the hair, was now splashed with gray.

"Val, vat I do for you, hey?" he demanded, wheeling around in his chair and peering sharply up with those bottomless black eyes into the shifty orbs of the visitor. "Magee—eh? Vat dey call you? Fingers, eh? I remember you."

"Well, I should hope you do!" growled Magee with a snort. "Cut out all th' bull! Know me? Course you know me, Jan. Why shouldn't you, when you've cleared a wagon load of junk for me at about six hundred per cent. profit in your favor. You give me a pain. Let's git down t' biz. I ain't got no time to fool!"

"Business? Sure, I like business, Mr.—er—Fingers. Eh? Vat can I do for you, eh?" asked the old Hollander.

"You're sure mighty strong for that *eh* stuff, ain't you? Full o' *eh's* to-day. Suppose it's safe to talk over a little proposition here without that monkey outside gettin' an earful at th' keyhole?"

"Who—Jakie? How suspicious! Jakie knows his place, and that's up in front vaiting on the *common* trade—eh?" and the old fence's skin wrinkled into an oily smile, pregnant with suggestions. "Vat's your business, eh, Magee?"

The crook slid the packet he had brought from his room from his pocket and across the desk toward the money-lender, whose deft fingers made quick work of loosening the wrapper.

"A-a-ah!" The high, squeaky exclamation was wrung even from the throat of the calloused old fence as his vision was assailed by the gleam of the jeweled necklace. "Uh-h-u-u-h! Pretty plaything, eh, Meester Magee!" His voice trailed off thinly.

"What's your highest figure, Jan?"

There was no immediate answer. The crafty old rascal squinted his eyes until they became but mere black slits and puffed a jerky little tune through his mustache with a sort of hissing sound. He reached into a drawer for a jeweler's glass, which he twisted into one eye. For several minutes he hunched over the sparkling object, tapping on the floor with his foot.

"Humph! Vat you say, Magee?" He turned his crafty eyes slightly toward the crook and surveyed him with cunning furtiveness.

"Gee! Come to at last, have you?" snapped Fingers testily. "Didn't know but what you was in for a nice little nap! I'm askin' you how much for the string o' sparks?"

"Umph! How much *you* say, Meester Fingers?" persisted the Dutchman.

"S-a-a-y, what th'—— What's ailin' yu today, Van Dam? Never knowed you t' be so timid before that you couldn't set your own price on a article. Darned if I ever did! Well, I don't mind lettin' yu know that if yu git that fur a dime less than five thousand you're goin' t' have t' smoke me with a gat t' put it over!"

The old fence dropped back in his chair and leered with evil derision across at the crook; a weird cackle gurgled up from his scrawny throat.

"Five t'ousand dollar!" he chortled. "Ha, ha, ha! Meester Fingers, what you do? Kid yourself? I gif you—let's see—feefty und no more!"

The thief gave a little jump, and for a second a sickly grin flitted about his mouth.

"Aw, come on, Jan; come on, *come* on! Cut that joke stuff, an' let's git down t' business! An' it ain't goin' t' do yu a darned bit o' good t' try an' force me down in price! I'm

through for keeps with these here charity stunts!"

"Feefty dollar—not one cent more!" The tang of conclusiveness in the tone employed this time was not to be misunderstood. "Maype it bring one hundred feefty—two hundred dollar at sale in Amsterdam when I send it. But it's stolen property, and I ain't taking more as a feefty-dollar chance on it in dis city."

"You—you mean it's——" The younger man's words choked as he popped from his chair and confronted the smiling pawnbroker. His peaked face was ashen and drawn, his eyes blazing.

"Dem are glass imitations; no more!" purred the old Dutchman, wrinkling his leathery skin with a tantalizing grin, "and—oh, it's a pretty fair job, pretty fair."

For a brief second or two a deep silence reigned. Then——

"You lyin', thievin' rascal!" fairly howled the aroused crook, advancing belligerently upon the smirking old fence, whose seamed face was screwed up with mocking mirthfulness. "What you tryin' t' put over, huh? Think you're goin' t' flimflam me outa them beauts? Not so's yu kin notice it! Gimme them sparks, an' make it snappy, or I'll knock your ears off!"

The fence sobered instantly and waved his thin hands in earnest protestation.

"Have I not treated you always fairly in the past, Meester Fingers?" he demanded. "Iss it my fault the thing iss glass? If you doubt my vord, take it to any one else in the jewelry business; ask Jakie! Even that boy will be able to detect its falseness. Jakie! Oh, Jakie! Come!" The old Dutchman had arisen from his seat and called through the opened door to his assistant, who was at that precise moment busy wiping the glass showcases with a dusting cloth. The clerk hurried back at the bidding.

"Tell the chentleman, Jakie, how much you t'ink dese are worth to us," and he looped the necklace over the young man's palm. The latter borrowed the glass, bent in careful scrutiny for a moment or two and then looked up.

"Humph! We got a whole case full of this hired-girl junk, Mr. Van Dam. No room for a great deal more."

After they were alone once more the old Hollander smiled triumphantly at Fingers Magee.

"See? Vat you say now? I tell you the truth, huh? Even a whip-snapper like Jakie, he see that the stones were false! Bah! Take the trash away! I not use it at enny price! Bah!"

Blinking, like one in a daze, Fingers drifted out into the street.

"Wouldn't that freeze you, though!" he mumbled weakly. "Me thinkin' I'd glommed a young fortune, an' then t' have it turn out nothin' but a blasted bloomer! Bah! I must be gittin' old!"

Fast upon the burglar's departure from the office Van Dam snatched up his desk phone and jabbered excitedly into it.

"Yes," he roared to the party at the other end of the wire. "He just left. Feeling mighty busted up over it, too. Took it with him—yep. Talked in too big figures. Wouldn't listen to leavin' it for anything less than five t'ousand dollars! What's that? All right, I'll be here when you come."

Fifteen minutes later Bill McCorkel, operative for a private detective concern, bulged his huge bulk through the street entrance of the redemption parlors, nodded curtly to the salutation of the clerk and made his way unceremoniously to the back office, where he grunted a bearish greeting.

"Well, you seen the necklace, did you, Jan?" he eagerly demanded, dropping into a chair.

"Sure! Didn't I just phone you he was here with it and left?"

"Yeh. You did put over your part, just like I rehearsed you, eh, Jan?" There was a cold ring, tinged with a breath of suspicion, to the man's tones, and his eyes narrowed.

"Sure! Sure I did, Meester McCorkel! He is one much disgusted young man right now, thinking of all the trouble he went to to lift that string of colored glass! Ha, ha, ha!" The pawnbroker cackled shrilly, squinting up slyly at his visitor.

"Well, don't forgit if I catch you tryin' t' frame up any funny business I'll make you squirm in your hide for it. Don't git it into your head that I didn't know you've been runnin' a clearing-house for a gang of thieves!" The detective's menace was not to be mistaken.

Flash-like, the furrowed countenance of the old hypocrite assumed its native inscrutable stolidity—cold, moveless, mask-like.

"I never forget, Meester McCorkel—things like that," he mumbled, his fingers lacing and unlacing themselves in his lap. "I was faithful in carrying out my part, as *you* instructed."

"Fair enough, Jan; fair enough."

But when the door had closed behind his caller the cloak of fawning servility, of mean, cringing obsequiousness dropped away like a veil from the old Dutchman, and he scrambled to his feet and stood, shaking a bony yellow fist after the retreating form. The fathomless eyes, glittering wickedly, darted mockery, derision and contempt in the direction of Detective Bill McCorkel.

CHAPTER TWO

WHEN Fingers Magee left the establishment of Jan Van Dam he returned to his dingy covert in the squalid, comfortless old rookery conducted by tippling Kate Martin. His brain was a riot of rage and fury, and he spat out oaths that smacked of venom and malignancy, while his weazen face was ashen gray and his weak chin trembled. His virulent tongue, schooled in the filth of the underworld vernacular, heaped blistering abuse upon himself and the world in general. That the prize, to gain which he had undergone so much risk, and upon which he had banked to tide him over a winter of poverty, had turned out to be but a worthless bauble was like a blow in the face. Fingers wanted to think over the whole miserable affair, and when he reached his retreat he flung himself wearily upon the creaking old bed and stared up at the flakes of peeling calcimine that clung from the ceiling above. He had stuffed the necklace back into its hiding-place above the closet door. It may seem strange, but it had never once occurred to the crook to question the veracity of the old loan shark and his assistant as to the genuineness of the gems. Both had been prompt to classify them as being practically valueless. Fingers had accepted the verdict, although it had been a bitter pill to swallow. Van Dam's reputation for square dealing among the denizens of crookdom was firmly fixed, albeit they cursed him for his persistency in always grabbing the lion's share. Fingers had plucked a "bloomer." The crook gulped and confessed his blunder.

A sudden rap upon the door roused him from his moody reverie into the land of reality with a jerk, and his tricky eyes flashed toward the direction of the sound alertly.

He lay breathless, waiting a repetition of the summons. At the sound of another series of tappings, a trifle more imperative than the first, he rolled softly to the edge, lurched silently into a sitting posture on the mattress and eyed the door with doubt and apprehension stamped plainly upon his features. Presently, with cushiony cat-like tread, he slid over to it and glued his eye to a crack in the wooden upper panel.

"Come on, Magee, don't shut off th' light from that slit in the door," growled a gruff voice from the hall side. "Open up and have a look, if you can't guess who it is!"

The mental vision of a burly, square-jawed dick flitted before his mind, even before the latter brushed, with overbearing arrogance, into the room and faced him.

"Howdy, Magee?" he grated, eyeing the other with a taunting smirk about the corners of his mouth. "How's tricks?"

"How are you, McCorkel," returned the other with an attempt at confidence that fell flat.

The thick-chested visitor eased himself onto one of the ancient chairs and fixed a pair of cold eyes upon those of the man shifting uneasily before him.

"Sit down, Fingers. Want to have a little talk with you. Where you been keepin' yourself lately? Ain't seen much of you around your old hangouts the last few days. Not for almost a couple of weeks now. Say, darned if it ain't been ever since the Joyce job was pulled off!" A malicious leer danced in the steely orbs, and the thief's shifty glance could not meet it, but dropped sneakingly to the floor.

"Been sick," he mumbled. "Feelin' rotten with ther grippe."

"Sick, eh?" The detective bared his teeth with the slightest of tantalizing grins. "Yeh,

there's lots of flu around this fall. Workin' lately?"

"N-o-o. Not for a month or so," hesitatingly.

"Where'd you hold down a job last?"

"Say, McCorkel," blurted the crook with a faint flash of resentment, "what's all th' quizzin' about?"

"Come on; come on!" snapped the detective. "Lay off on that offended dignity stuff. I'll put the questions; you do the answering. Where'd you work last?"

"Kelly's," sullenly.

"Pool hall?"

"Never knowed him to run a drugstore, did you?" and a snarl lifted up one corner of the thin, bloodless lips, showing tartared teeth.

"Heavy job, I suppose? Tending tables?" There was ill-concealed contempt in the tones.

"Naw; knittin' socks for poor people," jeered Fingers.

"Don't get fresh, Magee. That ain't goin' to git you no place," cautioned the officer. "Where was you ther night of ther third—this month?"

The young man was silent, hesitant.

"Come!" barked the other, leaning forward and glaring balefully at his victim, his huge frame a-quiver and his big fists clenched and twitching. "Where was you on the night of November 3? Come, spill it quick!"

"Why, I was—I was home here in bed, of course. Didn't I just tell you I've been under the weather, Mac?" whined the other, twisting uneasily upon the edge of the bed.

"You're a liar, Fingers!" snapped back the officer with blunt conciseness.

"Say—you!" The housebreaker started to his feet with a show of bluster, as if to resent the distasteful appellation. But his courage oozed, and he dropped weakly back before the flinty stare of the merciless orbs of his tormentor.

"Don't try to bull me, Magee! You was seen hangin' around the Joyce neighborhood a couple of days before the stunt was pulled—gettin' the lay of the land, most likely. I'll tell you, Fingers, I'm as certain that you put over that Joyce job as I am that I'm settin' in this room! But what's ther good of pinchin' you as a suspect without I can nab you with the goods? Besides, it's only that necklace you lifted from old lady Joyce that I'm after. Where is it, Magee?"

A fluttery little laugh trickled from the lips of the thief, but it lacked the true ring of mirth.

"Rats!" he growled. "You're sleepin' on your back, Mac; turn over! If I had them sparklers, do you suppose I'd be layin' up half starving? Not so's you could notice it with the naked eye! Use your bean a little, Mac; use your bean!"

There was a ring of apparent genuineness in the fellow's tones that would have fooled most hearers. But not wise old Bill McCorkel. He refused to fall for the crook's cleverness at simulation. There had been just the slightest trace of hollowness in the explanation that the perfectly tuned ear of the officer had caught. He snorted disgustedly.

"Bunk!" he exploded. "Believe me, Magee, if it wasn't for some of ther darn fool laws against third degrees and rough stuff, I'd find out where you ditched that necklace if I had to hammer your blasted head off!"

An incipient grin lurked around the lips of Fingers Magee. The pasty, peaked features almost instantly regained their look of mingled innocence and injury.

"What good's all this stallin' going to do you, Fingers? You ain't got no chance of fencing them sparks in this burg. You'd be nutty to try it, with every 'receiver' watched. And don't git it in your head that I ain't been keepin' close tabs on you. Maybe you imagined you was pretty slick, but you had to sneak out once in a while for a bite t' eat. I've been keepin' cases on you."

"You sure have that, Mac! No argument there! Here; you left *this* behind you when you called this forenoon while I was out. Must have slipped old Kate the price of a flask of hooch, didn't you?" and the housebreaker extended the bright yellow lead pencil he had found toward the officer with an exaggerated display of politeness.

The detective appeared not in the least abashed at this unexpected exposure of his fancied secret endeavors, but accepted the proffered article with a grunt and thrust it in his pocket.

"Sure I was here this morning, and a couple of times before, too," he declared. "But if

you've got that string of jewels cached in this joint; I 'fess up, *I* can't uncover 'em!"

"They ain't here, Mac!" declared Fingers.

"Where, then? You've got 'em—some place!"

"Search me."

"Bosh! Look here, Magee." The officer's tone grew milder, and his demeanor more tolerant. "Why can't you an' me git t'gether on this thing?" He squinted sharply at the crook to ascertain just how his proposal was going to be taken. "I could pinch you an' throw you in jail on suspicion if I felt like it; but I'd have to prove you had a hand in the Joyce robbery. I admit I don't want to do that right now, the way th' cards are stacked. I'll open up clean to you, Magee. I suppose you know that old man Joyce has offered a pretty fair reward for the recovery of his wife's trinket?"

"So? How much?" demanded the other.

"One thousand bucks," lied McCorkel.

"Humph! All of that?" McCorkel was not just certain whether the inflection signified surprise or sarcasm. He hoped it was the former; hoped that the thief was ignorant of the real value of the bauble. He hoped the mention of so much ready cash might arouse the crook's cupidity. On the morning of the robbery hysterical Mr. Joyce, blazing with wrath, had offered the police department a reward of five thousand dollars for the return of the treasured toy of his jewel-worshipping mate and the arrest of the thief. Mention had not been made in the newspapers of the exact amount. McCorkel had obtained his information through police channels.

"A thousand bucks? Gee!" Fingers did seem impressed.

"Listen, Magee," wheedled the officer. "You're a pretty small sort of guy, all right, even if your method of gettin' a living is crooked. If you try to fence that loot some of the boys is goin' to nab you. There ain't a crook's clearing-house in the city ever watched closer than it's being watched at present. If *I* could get hold of the trinket, maybe I could squeeze the thousand berries outa old Joyce, even if I don't produce the party that pulled off the job. Yeggs are a slick bunch, you know, and every once in a while one o' them escapes capture," and the officer winked knowingly. "Would—say—a—a hundred induce you to cough it up, Magee?"

The crook darted a gimlet glance toward the other. Then he threw back his head and laughed boisterously.

"A *hundred!* Say, but you're a liberal cuss! A hundred—an' you git ten times that amount! Pretty rich! It wouldn't bother a kid in the kindergarten class to figure out your percentage, flattie. You must be gettin' nutty!"

But even while he was speaking peculiar lights flashed up in the house-breaker's ratty orbs.

McCorkel crossed his huge legs with a jerk of annoyance.

"We-e-l—a hundred an' fifty, then; how's that? Two hundred!" He produced from his pocket a respectable roll of bills, and rustled the crackling bait inticingly. "Mebby it does look to you as though I was coppin' the big end of it, and why shouldn't I? You're a thief, and I'm lettin' you off dead easy when I might make you a whole lot of trouble. Here *I* am, offerin' you a nice little stake to help you through a long hard winter, an' here *you* are turnin' it down. Bum gratitude, I calls it. Listen! Three hundred dollars is my last offer. Take it or let it alone. I'll git that loot some time, and if I do, bo, *you* look out! I won't let you slide so easy! What's your answer?"

For the bare fraction of a second the thief hesitated. Wavering indecision was stamped upon his features. It was plain he was suffering an inward struggle. Then finally:

"You win, Mac! I'm cornered. I'm hard up for jack, or I wouldn't fall for your dough. By rights I ought to hold out for a fifty-fifty split, but I know you too well. You're too big a hog for a square divvy. Slip me the three hundred smacks and I'll lay ther sparks in your paws." He held out a trembling palm toward the detective.

The latter could hardly count out the money quickly enough, and he crammed the banknotes into the thief's clutching fist with a wheeze of triumph.

"Here you are, Fingers!"

The house-breaker thrust the roll of currency into his clothes and stepped toward the closet door. He inserted the blade of his jackknife behind the header-block, pried it from

position and drew the parcel from its place of security.

While his back was turned a sly, singular expression had crept over the crook's countenance; a look of crafty cunning, a leer of triumph, which would have caused some misgiving on the part of the grim, self-satisfied sleuth could he have beheld it.

"That's them, Mac, and you're sure pickin' 'em up easy, I'll tell the world!" saying which the burglar whirled and laid the stolen beauties before the detective.

McCorkel's eyes blazed with greed and exultation. He started with a little exclamation at the flashing splendor of the jewels. Recovering from the fascinating spell, he began slowly and methodically to rewrap the necklace and stow it away in an inner pocket. With slow-moving deliberateness he gained his feet, and it was not until then that he seemed suddenly galvanized into a new force of animation. He darted forward with an agility surprising in so heavy a man. His hand flashed to his hip, and a black-barreled automatic covered the startled, gasping crook.

"Stick 'em up, Fingers—*quick!*" he snapped.

The thief gaped with amazement.

"Er—what——"

"Up with 'em, and don't try any foolishness! Gimme back them three hundred dollars of mine, and make it snappy!" he grated icily. "You go from here to jail!"

"What!" The chalk-faced culprit almost shouted the single word.

"You're pinched, you poor boob! You was easy, Fingers! A regular hick! I gave you more credit than that! Did you think for a holy minute that I was going to put out my own hard-earned money? Not me! But you swallowed the bait like a starved turtle!"

"But—but—you——" McGee's tongue refused him.

"Oh, I know I said lots of things I didn't just exactly mean," was the scoffing rejoinder. "There's tricks in all trades, you poor fish, and the profession of runnin' down thieves is plumb full of 'em! I've got you right where I been wantin' t' git you for a long time, you cheap bum! That reward calls for the return of the necklace—*and* th' thief! I don't mind spillin' it to you that the amount old Joyce offers is *five* thousand. Oh, you've got a nice little stretch staring you in th' face, Fingers; you sure have!"

The cornered crook, panting with fury and with murderous hatred blazing from his wicked eyes, stood glaring at his foe. His pinched features were blanched to the color of ashes, and the muscles of his shrunken frame twitched and jerked spasmodically. His bitter, fixed stare remained glued upon the grinning visage of the detective, his orbs spitting fires of virulent rancor, withering and contemptuous and blighting.

"You—you dirty, rotten—*rat!*" he screamed insanely; "you low-down, double-crossin' rat!"

"Magee, don't start nothin' rash, 'less you want t' shuffle off!" and the black muzzle of the gun menaced the crook steadily.

As they stood glaring at the other there came a rasping noise, shrill and whining, from behind. The battered old door swung solemnly open. A draught created by the inrush of air from an opened street door had caused the portal to swing upon its squawling hinges. Slight as the occurrence would have proven under ordinary circumstances, it came with the startle of a powder blast, and caused both men to flash an inquiring look in the direction of the sound. The detective, by reason of his individual position, was compelled to throw his chin over one shoulder, and thus for the merest fraction of time was but partially facing his prey.

Nimble-witted from years of stern schooling in the college of the underworld, the crook, trapped like a mouse and deadly desperate, was the first to recover from the interruption. With a vicious squeal of pent-up hatred and malice he snatched at the heavy china pitcher upon the stand beside him. With a swift sweep of a skinny arm he lashed it down upon the skull of Detective Bill McCorkel. The officer crumpled to the carpet like a rag, and the gun in his fist roared out and clouded the room with smoke.

Through the haze McGee's form darted with the spring of a rabbit, and the patter of scurrying footsteps sounded on the stairs, each second growing fainter and fainter until at last, far below, the dull bang of a closing door floated upward. The only sounds to be heard after that were the frightened gabble and

shrill screams of terrorized women and children huddled in the hall.

CHAPTER THREE

IT was a confident and more or less triumphant Detective William McCorkel of the "Argus Detective Agency" who mounted the front steps of the Joyce residence out on Sheridan Boulevard late the following forenoon.

After having been admitted by a saucy-eyed maid-servant into a small reception parlor, this self-same individual slumped down, wilted and flaccid, into the depths of a huge arm-chair. Next he gulped up stupidly at a snappy-appearing young chap, whose good-looking features broke into a broad, boyish grin at the other's too-apparent discomfiture.

"It really was laughable, the way dad blew up and went all to pieces when the robbery was discovered," the young man was saying.

"Dad had ordered mother's necklace delivered from the safe-deposit vaults for a reception. He rushed down to police headquarters and offered a reward of $5,000 for the return of the string, and he included the capture of the chap who stole it among the requirements. But the particular necklace the poor crook had taken the trouble of lifting from mother's room was only a cheap imitation of the genuine. At the last moment mother returned it to the safe-deposit vaults, deciding not to wear it. You see, none of our women folk ever wear their really valuable stuff except upon quite extraordinary occasions. It's too deucedly hazardous, you know. Why, I believe mother's original rope of jewels is worth somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollars, and you can see that it would be sheer craziness to put such temptation in the way of some poor, hungry chap."

"Then—then these stones are only phonys?" The voice sounded ridiculously weak and spiritless considering it had come from so thick and bull-like a throat as McCorkel's.

The young fellow twirled the flashing article of feminine adornment on his finger with exasperating indifference.

"Oh, I wouldn't say wholly valueless, but comparatively so, when judged by the cost of the genuine article. Mother has two of these inferior replicas, so of course she really could get along very nicely without this one. They cost about two hundred dollars apiece. However, my parents will be home day after tomorrow, and maybe you would better wait till their return. Dad may slip you a fifty-spot for this."

Wild with fury McCorkel left the house and went looking for Fingers McGee. But that astute individual was stowed in the hold of a ship bound for South America.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

CURIOSITIES OF NATURE

MAN'S inventions are frequently only imitations, more or less clumsy, of nature's own devices.

It would appear, for instance, that even insects have sounding boards, although they may be supposed to know nothing of the laws of acoustics.

Entomologists have found on the under side of the forewings of two Japanese insects, of the families cidaria, a curious pit or hollow closely connected with an organ believed to be used by the insect for producing strident sounds. The pit would evidently serve to concentrate the sound as the shell-shaped orchestra stands reflect the melody of the instruments to the ears of the auditors.

In the Khari hills of India another species of the same insect has been found which possesses a similar set of organs. The shrill, creaking sounds that insects produce seldom fall pleasantly upon our ears, but they must produce a different effect in the insect world, else nature would hardly have provided these little musicians with sounding boards.

A Monkey Pickpocket

THE unusual sight of a monkey appearing as a witness in court occurred in San Francisco recently. "Joe Doe" was charged with being an accessory to the crime of pocketpicking. The monkey was really the one that was guilty of the more serious charge, but doubtless the little fellow was innocent of any evil intention. A lady was horrified while passing Post street to find a monkey perched on her shoulder, and before she could recover from her paralyzed condition her gold watch and chain were in the monkey's grasp, and the little thief had disappeared.

A number of people saw the theft committed, but all seemed to pay more attention to the shrieking lady than to the thief. When she had been brought out of her hysterical state a thorough search was made for the robber, but not the least trace could be found. About two weeks after the occurrence another lady, while passing along Sutter street, was treated in a similar manner, only this time the monkey secured a valuable diamond, which was torn from one of her ears. Two or three bystanders saw the act and entered in a hot pursuit of the four-footed rascal, who ran up to the adjoining corner and turned down Stockton street like a flash. By this time a policeman had joined in the chase, and when the corner was reached the monkey had as completely disappeared as though the earth had swallowed him.

Nothing was seen in the immediate vicinity but a tall, well-dressed man leisurely proceeding down the street. Doubtless he would have continued his stroll had not the officer noticed a suspicious bulging under the right side of his loosely fitting Prince Albert coat, and he was overhauled. Clinging as close to him as possible under the coat was found the monkey.

Of course the stranger was indignant at being so grossly insulted, but nevertheless was compelled to accompany the officer to the police station, where, upon being searched, several gold watches and articles of valuable jewelry were found upon his person.

Next morning, when the case was called in court, none of the frequenters showed any particular interest even when a tall, swarthy man rose, passing through the little gate in the railing, approached the witness stand and agreed to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth.

As soon as the witness had finished his testimony, counsel for the defense arose and began an argument to the effect that the prosecution had not proved their case, and that his client ought to be discharged. The prosecuting attorney had one more witness, however, and he arose and said:

"Your Honor, I have but one witness to introduce, when I am willing to close the case. Call Miss Mono."

Miss Mono was at once brought into court in the arms of a stalwart police officer. Miss Mono was not a young lady, but a South American monkey of diminutive size. With a wriggle and a jump the little animal landed plump in the arms of the prisoner, chattering and bobbing about with every demonstration of joy.

Joe Doe didn't seem to relish such evidence of recognition, and impatiently pushed the gleeful little beast away.

"If the court please," continued the attorney, "I wish to prove by this monkey that the defendant is guilty as charged." He then waved his hand at the crouching animal, which regarded him attentively. Another motion made in the direction of the judge caused the chattering little thief to comprehend, and before the court knew what was up his watch and chain were in the hands of the monkey, scampering over to the accused. The latter's face assumed a deep pallor, for he knew that his former means of living were lost to him, and that San Quentin stared him in the face.

THE MOUSE

BY

MERRITT L. ALLEN

THE young man aroused himself from the dirty bed sufficiently to reach for a cigarette from a chair by his bedside. He stuck the cigarette in his mouth and then deftly lighted a bird's-eye match with his thumbnail. Every time he inhaled a mouthful of the smoke his eyes opened just a little farther, and when he was fully awake he tossed the butt into a broken jar at the foot of the bed. As he followed the flight of the stub there came within his vision something that moved. He started with fright, but it was only a common wood mouse, which, more frightened than he, scurried back to a hole in the wall, only to stick its head out to watch the movements of this human being.

The man, who stretched himself lazily, had been nicknamed the "Mouse" by his companions, for, like the mouse, he waited until night fell to crawl out, prying into the nooks and corners of the city, taking anything of value that was within easy reach, but always scurrying back to this hole in the wall whenever he saw a suspicious move. Thus far the police had been unable to identify him with any of "the jobs that were pulled," although they knew he was active, and it became a dry quip at headquarters, "Has any one got a patent on a trap to catch the 'Mouse' yet?"

The Mouse looked around his room and chuckled. "Don't look much like some of the dumps I visit at night. Must get busy and clean up some day."

A dilapidated old bookcase stood by the wall opposite the door which opened into the hallway. The shelves of the bookcase were loaded with various kinds of poultry journals, and except for one or two recent numbers they were covered with a thick layer of dust. The Mouse chuckled again as he looked over the disorderly array.

"I'm glad I haven't any honey bunch who wants to move all the furniture around to clean up. She might run onto something that'd startle her."

The Mouse suddenly reached for a pillow and threw it at the venturesome wood mouse, which had crept a few inches from its hole.

"Get back in your hole, namesake. Don't you know your natural enemy is watching you?"

Some noise in the hallway attracted the attention of the Mouse, and then after a moment of silence there was a terrific racket. Some one was coming up the stairs. The Mouse sprang from the bed with celerity. His whole demeanor indicated that he was trying to evolve the meaning of the disturbance. No one could reach the second or the third floor without arousing every one in the house; that

is, if they used the stairs. The Mouse stood almost motionless for just a second, pricking up his ears at the noise and seeming to sniff the air.

"It sure is the police," looking around the room to see if, by chance, he had left anything in sight that could be used as evidence against him.

"I wonder who them cats are after this time? I should think they'd get wise to themselves that we know when they're after us."

The front door was always unlocked, and the hinges were never oiled. The occupants of the dwelling habitually slammed the door when entering, but the police closed it carefully and then tiptoed to the stairs.

What could be more significant of their approach? The loud squeak from the hinges and then no sound of footsteps until the implacable noise of the first step startled the place. Even then the police gave themselves away, for the unexpected clamor left them motionless with surprise.

The Mouse turned his head as if marking the ways of escape. There was the rear window and a cleverly concealed trapdoor in the floor, but the Mouse, disregarding them, hurried over to the old bookcase and pulled it from the wall. He had just time enough to crawl into a hole in the wall and pull the case back to its former position when the door was kicked open and a blue-uniformed and a plain-clothes man came in.

The Mouse watched them through a little peep-hole in the bookcase. He wiggled his nose in gleeful ecstasy at the blank amazement of the two law-enforcers.

"He's slipped us again, Joe," pointing to the smoking cigarette in the jar. "But anyhow, I don't see any use of pinching him unless we got the goods on him."

"He certainly is a foxy mouse, sergeant. But I'll nab this fellow yet."

"How you going to do it?"

"I've got a swell little trap already for Mr. Mouse. I'm sure he pulled that silk robbery last night, but I guess he don't bring his goods up here," picking up a dusty magazine from the bookcase. He tossed it on the floor when he saw the picture of a big rooster on the cover.

"Hot stuff for a crook to read! Let's get out of this dirty hole," giving the room a final "once over" before going out.

They had hardly started down the stairs before the Mouse crept from his hiding-place, his face wreathed in smiles.

He was thinking of his father and his grandfather. They had never been caught, and now he was the possessor of the nose that could detect any kind of trap. He glanced around the room with approving eyes. How he did love this life! No master, easy pickings, lots of fun, and this little dump where he slept and dreamed. But would he be as lucky as his father?

He had often heard and read of the big open country where there was plenty for the asking, and a determination was constantly coming up to go and see for himself. Once more the resolve vaguely stirred within him to put this life behind his back and to seek an honest living. The lambent sparkle in his eyes suddenly died away, and the reaction, caused by his narrow escape, took hold of the Mouse. He sat down on a rickety chair and dropped his head on the palms of his hands. At first his mind was a gloomy blankness, and then various scenes began to move rapidly before his inner vision. He saw his likeness prowling about the city, taking what he wanted, but always eluding the watchful eye of the law. At the thought of his enemies his eyes snapped and his mouth drew down into a scornful sneer. But then a shudder ran through his frame. A picture flashed before him for a fraction of a second and then was gone—a picture of striped clothes and iron bars, which seemed to leer at freedom. The Mouse arose to his feet with an oath, hurling the chair into a corner as he did so.

"Some day, some day, I'm going to get away from this life and be an honest-to-God man," he said, picking up a recent number of "Chicken Farms."

"Perhaps I could make a go at this stuff," he said with feeling, as he slowly thumbed the pages of the magazine, and then he slowly shook his head.

"I wish I could can this feeling that I ought to give up me old line! I was born in this very house, and I wanta kick the bucket here."

But the mental picture of striped clothes and iron bars still dampened his resilient spirit

like the fog that enveloped the city on a misty morning.

When the Mouse was attired for the eveing he was in decided contrast to the dirty room called his home. He wore sport clothes, patent-leather shoes and all the accessories of a "sport," but he had hard work to hide the kit of tools in the snug-fitting suit. The detective's boast was still ringing in his ears as he made ready to leave his room.

"I'd like to get hep to the game that hawk intends to spring on me. They sure are getting wise to me."

He stood in the hallway for a minute, pulling at his freshly shaved chin.

"I'd better not go out the front way; the street is probably lousy with trailers."

The Mouse went back into his own room and crawled out of the rear window on a ledge. He knew every crack, every nail that projected from the building, and he had no difficulty in working his way to an open window of the house adjoining. He made his way to the back door of this building without challenge from the occupants. He leaned against the door frame for some minutes before slipping out on the narrow street. It looked as if his fingernails were being carefully manicured, but the Mouse was scrutinizing every sign of life in the near neighborhood.

"I know they ain't got anything on me so far, but I don't want them trailing me and then catch me with the goods."

It was only eight o'clock; plenty of time to get a snack to eat and to see the last performance at some vaudeville house before attending to his objective for that night. He sighed as he passed the barred doors of Flannigan's place. There he used to order beer and hot roast-beef sandwiches and could chin with his cronies while enjoying the repast. He was never bothered there, for the police, for some mysterious reason, kept away from Flannigan's. Across the street was a dilapidated stew house, and with a sigh the Mouse drove his hands in his trousers pockets and headed for it, stopping for a minute or two to read the bill of fare. The agreeable odor that came to his nostrils decided him, and he pushed the een door open with his shoulder.

He reappeared in about ten minutes. The "chow" had evidently put him in good spirits, for he was whistling a gay tune. He picked out a "show" a few minutes' walk from the eating house. The heavy odor of perfume and a rag-time orchestra made him feel comfortable at once, ready for the various acts as they appeared. But there is always some inconveniences at a place of amusement. Two well-dressed men sat down in front of the Mouse and started a conversation. Above the blare and shriek of the orchestra and the hum of voices from all parts of the theatre he could now and then catch a word of what they were saying.

"Big deal—foolish——"

The lights went off and the orchestra softened its tone. The spot-light jumped around the stage for a second and then waited at the side entrance for some kind of female who was singing behind the door.

Presently she appeared in a dazzle of color—what there was of it. But the Mouse had never been educated up to anything above this; how he did wish those two fellows would keep still! The musicians had softened their instruments and the singer had dropped her voice until the audience had to strain their hearing to catch the words, but the two men paid little heed to her.

"Yes, sir, one hundred thousand bones in his house to-night, and he probably out to a show."

The Mouse forgot the singer and tried to catch more of what they were saying, but the applause of the house drowned their voices for a minute, however; when the curtain dropped for the last time on the act he was able to pick up their conversation again.

"That little brown house at the end of Swan street with the wooden fence in back of it—— Look at that ham! What's he trying to do, make us laugh?"

The Mouse could hardly wait for the picture when the house would be darkened so that he might slip out unobserved. He would go up to this house and have a look at it anyway before pulling the deal he had in mind.

The house was easily found, and, sure enough, there was a wooden fence in the rear to shut off the view of an ugly alley. There was no light in the place; evidently the owner, whoever he might be, had gone out for the evening.

"If the poor boob is out looking for excitement, I might just as well sneak in and give the place the once over."

The Mouse studied the house and vicinity with minute care. The street was located in a desolate part of the city, so there was not much fear of detection.

"The whole thing looks so easy that I'm scared of it."

He leaned up against the tree, whose shelter he had sought in order to study the house without exciting the suspicion of any one who might be passing by.

"Scared or no scared, I'm going to have a look inside that house. A chance like this don't flirt with me every day, and I'm going to grab it."

An arc lamp at the end of the street jumped on and off for several seconds and then decided to continue to shed its insufficient light.

"I've got it. I'll go down the alley back of the house, ease myself over the fence and then look for a shady window that can be jimmied."

Fully determined that this was the best plan, the Mouse pulled his cap farther down over his eyes and glanced furtively around. The street was entirely deserted. It did not take him long to reach the alley.

"If there's a hundred thou. in that house and I can get my paws on it, why, I'll buy a little place in the country and live right," he muttered in anticipation.

He had reached the fence by this time and was about to climb over, but upon second thought halted.

"Hold on, old boy," he maundered. "What's the big idea, sticking your neck in any old place before giving bright eyes a chance to look around?"

Almost at the same instant he was conscious that some one was on the other side of the fence and had started a whispered conversation.

"He'll be here. Bill phoned me that he could hardly wait for the picture before sneaking out. Sh-h-h! We'd better lay low. He ought to be here before long."

The Mouse was all a-tremble, and just as soon as he could get his locomotive system to work scurried back to his room, and there, trembling still, figured out this trap that had been set for him. Those two fellows who sat in front of him at the theatre were "bulls," and had undoubtedly followed him when he left the restaurant, or perhaps before. And that man behind the fence, he was sure it was the same one who had entered his room with the policeman but a few hours ago.

The next night the Mouse sallied forth again, but this time he made sure that no one followed him. He was going to turn the first trick he set out to do the night before. He had a five-mile walk, which took him into the suburbs, for he did not dare to take a trolley. The house he singled out was well back from the road. He had been there before. For several nights he had crept around it, peeking in the windows whenever opportunity afforded. Three nights ago he had seen a gray-haired man open a safe in the library, and the Mouse was here to-night to do that same thing.

At about eleven o'clock the last light in the house was snapped off and at a few minutes past twelve the Mouse was raising the window that led into the library. Two minutes later the rays of his flashlight were playing upon the safe. The Mouse dropped on his knees before the safe, and as he did so several bells began to ring with intense madness. He was too stunned to move for several seconds, and then he made a rush for the window he had entered, but was not quite quick enough. Some one grabbed his coat collar.

"Now then, my fine young fellow," his captor purred, "I've got you, and I'm going to keep you."

The Mouse tugged in vain.

"I saw you peeking in the window the other night, so I fitted up this alarm and slept on the sofa in the other room. Worked good, didn't it, eh?" attempting to turn the Mouse around so he could take a look at his face.

The Mouse never had to fight before to get away, but if the hand had been on his arm or shoulder he would have bitten it. What he did was to kick his captor in the pit of the stomach and leave his coat in the determined grasp of his hand.

The Mouse did not leave his haunts for several days, and during that time took everything into consideration, fighting against reason that told him to give up this manner of

living before the law found an opening and shut him up. He had about five thousand dollars; why not give up this life and try to make his living in an open way so that the police would not bother him? His grandfather, his father and his mother had lived the same way that he was living. This dirty room was home to him and he loved the excitement of the game. But he was afraid, from his two nights' experience, that he had lost the ability of scenting a trap. He lighted a cigarette and walked over to the bookcase, and in deep thought turned over a few pages of a beautifully illustrated journal, stopping every now and then to study some illustration. Then the Mouse prepared for sleep. He had decided upon his future course.

The Mouse invested his savings in a well-equipped chicken farm, but was obliged to give a three-thousand-dollar mortgage. He was delighted with the life—no police to fear and his neighbors welcomed him in the community. But behind his back they shook their heads and said:

"What does he want to sink all that money in such a place for, when he doesn't know a thing about chickens?"

Ever since he was a little boy the Mouse had had a desire to raise chickens. What boy hasn't? His mother had bought him picture books of chickens and animals of the farm, and later on, as his hobby grew, he bought an almost endless number of magazines and books on chicken-raising. It had only taken a few days on his farm, however, to convince him that the farm of his dreams and the farm in reality were vastly different.

The first year passed very pleasantly for the Mouse, and he just about "broke even" on the farm. He made many friends out there in the country, but he was unable to mix with them as he had with the boys back in the city.

There was one thing, however, the Mouse found hard to do, and that was to work in the daytime and sleep at night. He would frequently take a lantern out among the chickens and start to work. His neighbors tried to help him by making suggestions, but the habits of the old life persisted in hampering his endeavors.

"Can't make that young fellow out," one of his neighbors remarked to another. "He don't listen to no reason at all. I tell him how to go at sum'n and he turns around and does sum'n 'tirely different."

"Yes, and hain't you noticed he ain't as 'thusiastic as he uster be when he fust come here?"

"Come to think about it, guess you're right. 'Nuther case of one of them city chaps gone wrong farmin' it."

The beginning of the second year was like a signal for trouble. The hens wouldn't lay and some kind of disease killed off half of his flock; and besides, he was homesick now. When summer came there was the interest due on the mortgage and no money to pay it with. The chicken coops needed repairing. The bungalow needed a new roof, and he knew that the neighbors were laughing at him.

"Laugh, you poor hayseeds!" he mumbled in scorn. "You don't know what real life is. I wish some gink would give me a kick for throwing up a life that was worth living just because it wasn't right."

He tried to reason out just why he had been scared at his run of hard luck back in the city.

"I got out of it. Why, the police didn't even get a finger on me. That old guy out in the 'skirts thought he had me sure. Ha! ha! ha!"

Thus the spirit of homesickness got hold of him as he rehearsed the memories of past days, making him despondent and long for the old life. He neglected the few fowls that he did have left and they finally died of thirst and hunger. It would take several hundred dollars to put the place in shape again.

One night a figure came out of the bungalow with two suit-cases. It was the Mouse, headed back to the city after an absence of nearly two years. The call of the old life had won out, and there was joy in the heart of the Mouse. He shook his fist in the direction of the chicken coops.

"Good-by! Anybody can have you that wants to live in this God-forsaken country.

As he passed beyond the bungalow he breathed.

"One dirty little room, but it's home sweet home to me. There's where I can enjoy life, and I certainly can dodge the police better than I can raise chickens."

It was nearly three o'clock the next day before the Mouse stealthily turned the corner and walked down the street on which his home had been.

"Most two years since I've seen the old place. I wonder how all the boys are."

He crossed over on the other side of the street that he might better view the weather-beaten residence. His eyes traveled from one end of the street to the other, but was unable to comprehend what he saw.

"Holy mackerel! Everything is all cleaned up; look at the old hang-out; lace curtains at the windows and the place all dolled up with a coat of paint!"

The Mouse shifted his weight from one foot to the other, puckered his lips and uttered a long, low whistle.

"Something must have happened while I was away or else my blinks have gone on the fritz." And, strange to say, the sight did not altogether displease him. The entire street was so clean and quiet. Some one placed a hand on the Mouse's shoulder and he turned around with a guilty start.

"Well, well, if it isn't my old friend, the Mouse."

"Jerry!" wringing his hand. "For the love of Mike, what's happened?" with a broad sweep of his free hand.

Jerry grinned.

"Kinda surprised, ain't yuh?"

"I'll say," looking at the neat appearance of his old friend.

"You ain't no more surprised than I was; most as surprising as when liquor took wings. Now that it's done, everybody's happy, even your own pals. Of course, there was a few that didn't want to work for a living, but they've gone where there's easy picking. You see, it was like this: the place got so rotten that sum'n had to be done. A lot of them societies uptown got together and did it. Got a new bunch in office and they stood behind them. I tell you what, things have been taking place since last I saw you."

The Mouse was stupefied. He felt lost and without support. He turned and met the kindly eyes of Jerry.

"I guess you're wondering where you're going to bunk in and where your bread's coming from. Don't worry about that now, old top; come on over to Flannigan's and get a bit to eat."

"Flannigan's?"

"Sure, the mayor had it fixed up into a swell restaurant. Come on."

The Mouse ate his meal in silence. He had much to think about and Jerry let him alone, knowing full well what was passing through his mind.

After the meal Jerry looked at his old friend and startled him by saying:

"Want a job?"

"A job?"

"Sure, that's my line, finding jobs for you fellows so you won't have to—well, you see, the city give me the job. It'll mean hard grubbing at first, but we're all behind you. It ain't so bad after you get used to it, honest it ain't; fact of it is, I wouldn't go back to the old life."

The Mouse dropped his head. He felt as if he must start life anew; the farm was a thing of the past and the old life was only a mist now. Of course, he could go to some other city and continue his devious cunningness, but the prospect did not appeal to him.

He reached over and placed a hand on Jerry's.

"I've been on a chicken farm since I left here, but it didn't pan out as I expected. I lost all I had, and I hated the life out there like poison. I came back to take up the old life, but I guess it ain't the crooked life I was hankering after at all; no, it's to be with the pals I growed up with and the crowded city with all its doings. I'm kinda glad, though, that I went out in the clean open country; it sorta wiped off the slate, so I can start figgering all over again."

Jerry pushed back his chair.

How would you like a job hustling freight—night shift? Working nights will keep you in good humor. I know how you feel. The pay will be twenty dollars per. Will you take it?"

"Yes," the Mouse replied, placing his hand on Jerry's shoulder, "and from now on my name is Jim Farrow."

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

A Curious Salt Well

RUNNING near the town of Meade, in the southwestern part of Kansas, are two old trails, which have been abandoned now, but which were formerly two of the most famous on the plains. Starting at Fort Dodge they ran on through No Man's Land and the Texas Panhandle, with radiating branches extending into New Mexico and Northwestern Texas. These trails run almost parallel and at the mouth of what is known as "Stump Arroya" they nearly meet. This is a beautiful stream of clear, cold water, which flows into the Cimarron river.

Years ago the freighters held full sway in the West and the business was at its height on these trails. One October evening an old "bushwhacker," as the freighters were called, camped on a beautiful piece of bottom land that is now almost within the corporate limits of Meade City. He had two "prairie schooners," as the heavy freight wagons were called, each drawn by six mules, which, with one other man, comprised the whole outfit. It was late when he made his accustomed halting place at that spot and the old man hastily prepared a frugal supper of rusty bacon and flapjacks.

Suddenly the whole earth began to vibrate; it seemed to pulsate in regular rhythm, like the waves of the ocean, until the old man and his assistant could with difficulty keep on their feet. The mules became terribly frightened, and in a few minutes became stampeded and ran several miles out on the prairie, and then, alarmed at the unusual phenomena, sought their camp again and the side of their drivers, as if they thought they could protect them. The old man said that a few minutes after the ground began to rock there came the most awful noises he had ever heard, and he had been on the plains for twenty-five years.

The stampede of 10,000 buffaloes was nothing in comparison. The commotion and the strange sounds seemed to come from below, from the very inside of the earth itself, then an unusual darkness seemed to settle over all, and then, while he was looking up the trail, which he declared he could still distinguish, there came another shock, accompanied by a series of horrible sounds more awful than the first, and felt the ground settling underfoot.

In another moment there issued from the fissures in the earth a phosphorescent light, and then, thoroughly frightened and demoralized, he and his man hastily hitched up the team and started down the trail as fast as the scared mules could haul the heavily loaded wagons. They did not stop until they reached Stump Arroya, seven miles away.

Whether the old freighter was really the witness to the strange sights he claims to have seen, or whether it was the result of a frightened imagination, no one can tell, but on that October evening a curious phenomena occurred. Fully thirteen acres of land suddenly disappeared, and what a few moments before was a level prairie entirely vanished, leaving an immense hole, large enough to bury a caravan of freighters. It is now known as the salt well, whose depth has not been accurately determined. Seven hundred feet have been reached with a line, but no bottom was found at that distance.

In place of the sunken land there rose in the hole a body of water so heavily saturated with salt that the human body cannot sink in it. This water rose to within forty feet of the top. For a long time after the strange scene was enacted the freighters could hear awful noises around the hole and the fissures emitted ghostly lights, until the superstitious men abandoned the trail and refused to go in that direction.

After the country had become settled, the farmers were awakened one night by strange rumbling noises and sounds as of the explosion of artillery. Next day seven immense rocks were found at the mouth of the well which had never been seen there before.

The Voice of Horror

By GERARD and BEATRICE LUISI

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

THE front door of a substantial-looking brown stone house on Madison avenue banged shut, and a young girl hurried down the steps and across the slush-covered street. A vicious gust of wind drove the sleet in her face as she turned a corner, and a low sob escaped her lips, but she only bent her head and hurried a little faster. At Fifty avenue she stopped a bus headed downtown and, having boarded it, sat huddled in a corner seat, shaking and trembling, and every now and then pressing her handkerchief hard against her mouth as if to stifle the hysterical sobs which seemed on the verge of breaking forth. The conductor looked curiously at the girl as he took her fare, but forebore to question her. Fortunately the bus was empty, so that she was spared the curious glances of other passengers.

At Washington Square she left the vehicle and made her way to a small, rather dingy-looking house in the heart of that section of the city known as Greenwich Village. In the dim light of the lower hallway she paused as as if to summon strength or courage; then with a sigh that was half a sob she went up to the top floor. She knocked timidly at a door which bore the name of Robert Osgood. No response came, and after a few moments she tried again, this time a little more loudly.

"Come in," called a masculine voice, and the girl opened the door and entered a studio.

A young man, who was sprawled out on a divan, smoking, sprang to his feet with an exclamation of surprise.

"Miriam! What brings you here?"

The girl uttered a little cry and ran toward him. Another instant and she was in his arms sobbing, while he endeavored with some bewilderment to soothe her.

The self-control which had so long held in check the hysterical outburst had completely given way, and she now wept and cried in wild abandon.

The young man led her to the couch and, having removed her hat and coat, forced her to lie down while he got her a drink of water. Then he bathed her temples and rubbed her little ice-cold hands.

Gradually the storm of grief subsided, and she lay quietly in his arms, with only a little shuddering sigh now and then shaking her slender body.

Robert Osgood kissed the childishly soft lips and murmured:

"What is it, sweetheart? Tell me what has happened?"

"Grandfather Carver has put me out," the girl replied bluntly.

"Impossible!" cried Robert in amazement. "At this hour of the night?"

"I wish I were mistaken," Miriam answered, beginning to sob again, "but I'm not. He said that I would have to give you up and marry Mr. Abbott, or leave the house that minute."

"He must be crazy. Even if he does object to me, that is no reason why he should put you out of his house. He has always been so fond of you I can't understand this sudden change."

"I can," replied Miriam, suddenly sitting bolt upright with flashing eyes. "Daniel Abbott has been talking to him and poisoning his mind against us."

"But how is it possible that your grandfather's business partner could poison his

mind against the daughter of his only child? It seems incredible."

"I don't quite understand it myself. You know that formerly grandfather would never listen to the slightest word against me. It is only since Mr. Abbott came back from South America that grandfather has changed. Nothing I do pleases him, and Mr. Abbott's influence over him increases every day."

"But tell me what happened to-night?"

"About nine o'clock," Miriam began, "the maid told me that the old gentleman wished to see me in the library. I expected to find Mr. Abbott with him, but for a wonder he was alone. He asked when I had seen you last. I told him on Sunday, when we had gone to a concert together. Then he declared that was the last time I must ever see you, and he said I must make up my mind to marry Mr. Abbott at a very early date. If I refused he would disinherit me.

"I answered that I did not care whether he disinherited me or not, and swore I would not marry Abbott.

"At that the old man flew into a terrible rage and said that a girl who had been carrying on a disgraceful affair with an artist was mighty lucky to have a man like Daniel Abbott willing to marry her."

"But good heavens, Miriam!" broke in Robert; "this is awful. How could he talk to you like that! You have done nothing wrong. Whatever indiscretion there may have been was my fault. He had no right to speak that way."

Smiling for the first time at his vehemence, Miriam continued:

"Well, he showed me a new will he had drawn up, leaving everything to Mr. Abbott. He said that if I would give you up he would destroy the will, and I would get everything, but that if I refused I would be left a pauper."

"Pretty soft for Abbott either way," commented Robert grimly.

"Yes," agreed Miriam, "sort of heads I win, tails you lose. Grandfather didn't seem to consider me at all. Of course I said I wouldn't give you up, and then he gave way to the most frightful fit of anger. I thought he was going to strike me, but instead he ordered me out of the house, and said he never wanted to see my face again. Then I came here," Miriam concluded, adding pathetically: "I had no place else to go."

"Of course," assented Robert quickly. "You did perfectly right to come to me. There is only one thing to be done now. I had hoped to have something worth while to offer you, Miriam. That is why I have waited so long before asking your grandfather's consent, but the way things are now it is best that we marry at once. Do you think you could be satisfied for a while with this cheap little place?"

"It will be heavenly with you," replied the girl, raising eager eyes to his.

And so, with sublime indifference to all things material, the two young beings pledged their lives to each other that night.

CHAPTER TWO

JUST as the milk wagons were beginning to rattle through the streets Robert and Miriam returned to the shabby house in Greenwich Village. He had taken Miriam to a little church near by, and they were returning to the studio man and wife.

In the vestibule Robert stooped and picked up a newspaper, a bottle of milk and a bag of rolls.

"Our wedding breakfast," he said ruefully, pointing to the milk and rolls. "I'm pretty poor, you see."

Miriam laughed.

"I can make simply dandy coffee," she answered, "and I love rolls."

Together they mounted the stairs and entered the studio.

While Miriam made the coffee at a gas range behind a large screen, Robert proceeded to set the little table and bring out such provisions as his cupboard contained.

In a few minutes breakfast was ready, and they seated themselves merrily at the table.

Miriam was pouring the coffee, when suddenly a startled exclamation from Robert caused her to glance in his direction. He was staring with wide, horror-stricken eyes at the morning paper.

"What is it?" Miriam asked with sudden foreboding, and before Robert could prevent her she had gone around to his side of the

table and was reading the startling headlines over his shoulder:

"Cyril Carver, wealthy manufacturer, found dead in his library. Foul play suspected. Granddaughter missing. Police already working on clue."

"Oh!" gasped Miriam, and without another word she fainted and crumpled up on the floor. Robert carried her to the couch, and with difficulty restored her to consciousness. His own brain in a tumult, he tried hard to think for her. The article had laid great stress upon the fact that Cyril Carver had died before he was able to sign a will disinheriting his Granddaughter Miriam, and also upon the fact that Miriam Carver had quarreled with her grandfather the night before and now was mysteriously missing.

Hardly knowing what to do or think, Robert decided to take his wife back to the Carver home. It would be easy to explain her absence, and it would look better for her to be there.

Although weary from lack of sleep and excitement, Miriam was anxious to return to her former home, if only her husband would go with her.

When they reached the house they found the police in possession, and when Miriam attempted to enter the room in which the body of her grandfather lay she was stopped by a policeman, who demanded to know who she was. On learning her name he told her with ill-suppressed excitement to step into the morning room where the detectives in charge of the case and a private detective summoned by the butler were examining the servants. At the door he announced somewhat pompously, "Miss Miriam Carver," and all eyes turned with one accord on Miriam as she stood trembling on the threshold, holding to her husband's arm.

"Come in, Miss Carver," said the youngest of the three city detectives, rising and walking toward her, while the other two dismissed the gaping servants with a few curt words.

"We have been looking for you, Miss Carver. Where have you been, may I ask?" asked the officer.

"I was with this gentleman, my husband," Miriam faltered.

"Your husband! I was not aware that you were married."

"We were married early this morning."

"After your grandfather was croaked," broke in the older of the police detectives in a sneering, bullying voice.

Miriam recoiled as if she had been struck a blow, while Robert started forward in anger.

"Oh, come, come now, Bronson," said the younger detective with a trace of annoyance in his voice, "I don't think that sort of thing is necessary."

"Don't you, now?" answered Bronson. "Well, let me tell you, one criminal is the same as another to me, even if she is a good-looking dame."

"Confound you," snapped Robert; "do you mean to insinuate that my wife is a criminal?"

"Tut, tut, young fellow," said Bronson calmly, raising a pudgy hand as if for quiet. "I don't know who you are, or anything about you, but I'll soon learn. If your wife killed old man Carver I'll find it out, and if she didn't I'll find that out, too. The best thing for you to do is to keep quiet until you're asked something."

Bronson then turned to Miriam as if to begin questioning her, but just at this juncture there was a knock at the door and a policeman thrust in his head to say that the coroner was leaving and wished to speak to the detectives.

"You go," said Bronson to the younger man. "I'll watch these birds."

The young detective left the room, and was absent only a short time. When he returned he was smiling.

"I am sorry to have kept you," he said to Miriam and Robert, "but we had to be on the safe side. You are at liberty to go now. The coroner has just informed me that your grandfather died a natural death from heart disease."

"What's that? Say that again!" cried Bronson irritably.

"The coroner just told me that Mr. Carver died a perfectly natural death from heart disease brought on, no doubt, by excitement or shock," smiled the young detective.

"Is that so? Well, I never really thought the little lady killed him. I wish you all the happiness in the world," he added jovially to Miriam, and advanced as if to shake hands

with her, but Miram shrank away from him, and he thought better of it.

"Good-by," said the young detective, looking keenly at Miriam. "The coroner says it was heart disease, so, of course, it was. But I've been wondering what was the nature of the shock that caused his death. Something out of the ordinary, judging by his expression, A will disinheriting you was found clutched in his hand. He must have died just as he was about to sign it."

"You say the will was unsigned!" gasped Miriam delightedly. "Then everything goes to me, and Daniel Abbott gets nothing."

"So I presume," replied the young detective rather dryly. "That is what directed suspicion against you, that and your sudden disappearance."

"You don't mean to say you suspected me of murdering my grandfather?" demanded the little bride in horror.

"Now that's all right, little lady, that's all right," interposed Bronson. "Since there ain't no murder, why, of course, there ain't no murder. Well, we better be gettin' back to headquarters. Good luck to you," and he strode pompously toward the door followed by his colleagues.

The private detective lingered a few moments to speak to Robert.

"In spite of the fact that the verdict was heart disease," he said, "things don't look quite right to me. If anything suspicious turns up, or if you or your wife need me, phone at my office. My name is Lawrence. Here's my card."

"Thank you," exclaimed Robert, shaking hands heartily. "I've heard of you, Mr. Lawrence. If we need you, you'll hear from us."

"I'll be right on the job as soon as I hear from you. Now, good-morning," and he followed the ward man out the door.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN the detective had gone Miriam turned to Robert with a white face.

"What do you suppose he meant?" she whispered.

"I don't know, Miriam. Do you feel strong enough to go in to see your grandfather now?"

"Yes, I want to go, Robert. Oh, I am so sorry I quarreled with him. He used to be so good and kind to me," and Miriam sobbed softly as she walked toward the library.

The body of Mr. Carver had been removed from the chair in front of the desk, where it had been found by the butler, and was now stretched on a couch beneath the windows. Robert and Miriam advanced softly, and Osgood very gently turned back the sheet from the face. With a cry Miriam clutched her husband's arm.

"What makes him look like that?" she muttered: "what makes him look like that?"

"It must be what Lawrence meant," answered Robert in a horrified whisper, gazing at the dead face. "I shouldn't have let you come in here."

The eyes were wide open and staring, as if at some horrible sight, while the lips were drawn back, displaying the clenched teeth. The whole expression was one of such agonized horror and fright as is seldom frozen on the face of the dead. No ordinary sight could have caused that look.

"Come away, sweetheart," Osgood urged, and he led the trembling girl from the room.

They found Mr. Wendell, old Mr. Carver's lawyer, and Dr. Franklin, the family physician, in the parlor. Both had known Miriam from the time she was a little girl, and the latter loved her as if she had been his own child.

On seeing Miriam's face Dr. Franklin rose in great concern and, taking her arm, led her to a large easy-chair.

"Sit down, my child, and drink this," he said, pouring out a glass of wine. "You are utterly exhausted."

Then as Miriam lay back in the chair with half-closed eyes he turned to the lawyer.

"She is in no condition to talk business now, Wendell," he said. "I'll take her upstairs and have the housekeeper put her to bed. You can wait here, young man," he said to Robert. "I know that you and she have been married, but what she needs now is complete rest. Wait here until I come back."

Dr. Franklin rang for the housekeeper, and

when that motherly person appeared he gave his instructions.

Just as Miriam, with the housekeeper's arms around her, was about to rise from her chair, the door was hurriedly thrown open, and a tall, distinguished-looking man with angry, flashing eyes entered the room. He carried a folded newspaper in his hand, and crossing the room to where Miriam stood, he thrust the paper before her reluctant gaze.

"What does this mean?" he demanded with suppressed fury. "Is this true?"

"Certainly," answered Miriam, glancing at the marked paragraph; "I was married to Robert Osgood early this morning."

"You dared to disobey your grandfather's expressed wishes?"

"In a case like this, Mr. Abbott," answered Miriam, "I obey only my own inclination."

Livid with fury, Daniel Abbott turned on Robert.

"Well, Mr. Fortune Hunter," he sneered, "it was very lucky for you that Mr. Carver died just when he did; before he had time to sign a will disinheriting his granddaughter in my favor."

Robert started forward with clenched hands, but Mr. Wendell, the lawyer, hastily interposed.

"Mr. Abbott, Mrs. Osgood is in no condition to discuss legal matters now. There will be a formal reading of Mr. Carver's last signed will and testament in a few days, and you will be requested to be present, as your name is mentioned."

Controlling himself by an effort, Abbott turned abruptly on his heel and walked to the fireplace, where he stood with his back to the other occupants of the room. Miriam, Dr. Franklin and the housekeeper passed quietly out the door and up the stairs. They had hardly disappeared when Abbott turned savagely on the lawyer.

"You say my name is mentioned in the old will, which I suppose you have in your possession. In what way, may I ask?"

"I have told you, Mr. Abbott," returned Wendell coldly, "that there will be a formal reading of the will in a few days; however, I may inform you that with the exception of a few annuities to old servants and employees the entire fortune of my late client goes to his Granddaughter Miriam. If, however, she dies without any direct heir, the bulk of the fortune goes to you."

"I see," snarled Abbott. "So this miserable girl and her fortune-hunting husband are all that stand between me and the money that is rightfully mine; the fortune which my advice helped to build up."

"I must request you to control your unseemly anger, Mr. Abbott. This is neither the time nor the place for such remarks as you have just uttered."

"Bah!" Abbott exclaimed in disgust, and without another word to the scandalized Mr. Wendell or the indignant Robert he left the room as unceremoniously as he had entered.

(*To be continued in the next number.*)

"GHOST" IS JUST RADIO

BENJAMIN WOLFE, who lives in Pendleton County, two miles west of Falmouth, Ky., declared recently antics credited to the Antigonish ghost of Nova Scotia are tame compared to recent goings-on in his home. He declares his sleep has been disturbed frequently by electric shocks and he has been badly frightened by crackling noises. Music and voices could be heard in nearly every part of his house, but particularly about his bed. Finally, Wolfe says, he was almost driven insane when, upon retiring, he distinguished, from a bedlam of sounds, the announcement that a lecture by some one in Philadelphia would be put on.

Wolfe then says he consulted with Fred Fisher, who had installed a radio outfit on a near-by hilltop, and after an examination they have concluded that the wire mattress or springs in Wolfe's bed have the functions of a wireless receiving station. Wolfe says the noises continue, but he no longer fears "ghosts."

TWO BURNS AND A SHORT CIRCUIT

BY

EARL NORTON

THE tree behind which "Sliver" Boggs shivered as he watched the big white house at the end of the long, winding driveway was large. But its heavy foliage failed utterly to shed from the slender form crouching in its shadows the drizzling rain which was falling.

"Hell of a night for a job like this," "Sliver" growled, feeling in his side coat pocket, fearing that the moisture had loosened the bit of perforated tape over his electric torch. That was "Sliver's" own idea, a tiny hole just large enough to provide a needle point of light through the centre, leaving all the rest in darkness.

The rain was coming faster. Pulling his coat collar up about his neck, "Sliver" pressed closer against the tree. Only twelve o'clock! It would be half an hour yet before the patrolman on the beat was due to pass the corner. At the same hour the night-hack, as "Sliver's" gentry dubbed a night watchman, would go off duty for lunch and be gone half an hour. In those thirty minutes "Sliver" expected to enter the big white house, pick up whatever might be lying around of value and depart unmolested.

He had spent three days and nights spotting the place, learning the watchman's habits and the hour at which he left the grounds unguarded. The house was the home of Luther Small, whose wealth had accumulated rapidly as the days of the war had lengthened. "Sliver knew from experience just about what he would find in such a house—fine pickings if all went well, cut-glass, silver, a few gold dishes.

He might even find a sparkler or two lying around loose on the dressing tables. Undoubtedly there would be a safe inside, but "Sliver" hadn't yet progressed to that point in his profession.

Somewhere in the distance the chimes of a clock sang out the hour of midnight. Almost at the instant the big iron gates at the entrance to the drive clanged open, and "Sliver" crouched low as he watched a big automobile slip silently up to the front door and stop. Peering around the tree, he saw a large, heavy-set man in evening clothes descend from the car and enter the house with a latch-key. It was Luther Small, owner of the valuables "Sliver" was about to appropriate. His progress upstairs to his bedroom was easily followed by the lights as they were snapped on and off. Fifteen minutes later the house was again all in darkness, at least from the point where "Sliver" watched. The darkened windows over the garage showed that the chauffeur, too, had retired for the night. And

still "Sliver" watched on. The night-hack hadn't shown up yet.

Five minutes passed, ten, then fifteen. It was twelve-thirty. The rain had now become a downpour. And still the watchman had not gone. Perhaps, thought "Sliver," it was too wet for him; he wouldn't go out to-night. He cursed his luck as he thought of the visit he had contemplated paying to Sam Bergstein, the fence, with his loot in the early hours of the morning.

The sound of hurrying footsteps made him start. Turning quickly, he saw the watchman, head bent against the rain, skurrying across the grass. The instant the gates clanged shut behind him "Sliver" was over the lawn. Two seconds and his jimmy was under a conservatory window. Ten seconds more and he was inside the house, closing the shutters softly. He had half an hour to work.

Shielding his light with his coat, he flashed it once across the room. Its thin, needle-like ray showed an open door directly opposite him. Treading softly, slowly, lest he strike against the furniture, he made his way toward it. Inside the other room he closed the door behind him. Now his light could not be seen from the street, and he flashed it about him less cautiously.

His eyes lighted up. There on the sideboard before him as though awaiting his coming was the greatest display of table silver it had ever been his misfortune to come upon. With a gurgle of satisfaction he jerked the cloth from a small table near by. He'd make old Bergstein come across for this lot—the old tightwad. He hefted a knife expertly. Yes, it was genuine. These new millionaires didn't buy anything else. Quickly but carefully, only his hands showing in the thin streak of light from his electric torch he had laid on the sideboard, he piled the silver into the centre of the cloth and gathered up the four corners. He'd take no chances on searching the other rooms. He had more than he had even hoped for. He'd get away with minutes to spare. Pretty soft.

A set of engraved gold salt dishes on a shelf attracted his attention. With a chuckle he shoved them into his pocket. Some haul! He'd live like a king for a year anyway.

Slowly, lest he overlook something, he flashed the light about the room. Nothing of any particular value remained. Snapping off the light, he started for the door.

Suddenly he halted. From somewhere upstairs came the sound of a groan, then a thud as though a heavy body had fallen to the floor. Trembling, half afraid even to breathe, "Sliver" stood there waiting. Only the thin ticking of the hall clock came to his ears. Softly he lowered his bundle to the floor. But for the groan it might have been a servant jumping out of bed in his bare feet. Outside the wind roared against the house. Again came the groan, hollow, rising to a shrill gasp. Again silence, save for the storm which rattled against the shutters.

Standing there in the darkness, "Sliver" felt himself shaking. Fear, not personal, not tangible, crept over him. It was the fear of the unknown, of something horrible upstairs. He felt the impulse to run, to hide. For long minutes he stood there trembling.

The sound of the clock in the hall striking one broke through the darkness. One o'clock! The watchman would be back! Without thought of the bundle at his feet he crept softly across the room, through the door and to the window through which he had entered. Hurriedly he lowered himself to the ground and ran for the shadow of the tree under which he had waited. The watchman was coming up the drive. Waiting until he turned the corner of the house, "Sliver" scooted across the lawn, over the wall and to the sidewalk.

Once in the street he paused. Confidence came back. He cursed himself for a coward. The biggest chance he'd ever had, and he had left it lying on the floor. Probably some fat old butler suffering from poor digestion. Disgusted with himself, he flung about and started down the street.

"Wait a minute, there!"

At the rough command "Sliver" halted short. At the instant a light flashed full in "Sliver's" face. Shading his eyes with his hand against the glare, he saw a policeman, in full uniform, step from behind a tree.

"Hello, Sliver," greeted the policeman amusedly. "What were you doin' in that house?"

"Sliver" thought quickly. The policeman

evidently recognized him from the two-year stretch he had just completed.

"Ain't been in that house," he growled. "Just cuttin' across the grass."

"Like hell you was. I saw you comin' away from there."

"Aw, y'ain't got nothin' on me," countered "Sliver" bravely, straightening his hundred and ten pounds up to his full five feet six. "G'wan an' search me if you want to." He thought of the silver lying on the floor in the dining-room. They couldn't find anything on him. They'd turn him loose before they found the silver.

"What's the matter? Git scared out?" The policeman was skeptical.

"I told you I ain't been near the place—just cuttin' across the yard. Can't a feller move in this town without you guys houndin' him to death?" "Sliver's" righteous indignation was mounting.

"Well, we'll let ye talk to the sergeant." Clamping a heavy hand on "Sliver's" shoulder, he led the way down the street to the nearest police call-box. "Sliver" went unresistingly. They had nothing on him, he reassured himself, and would have to let him go. As he rode to the police station in the patrol wagon he joked easily with the stolid policeman at his side.

"Hello, Sliver," greeted the big sergeant behind the desk as "Sliver" walked blithely into the station. "Haven't seen you for a couple o' years."

"Well, you'd better take a good look, 'cause you ain't goin' to see me long. This big stiff here," motioning toward the policeman who had brought him in, "thinks a guy can't walk along the street at night."

"Yes, policemen are like that sometimes, Sliver," agreed the sergeant softly. "What charge, Dolan?"

"Enterin'," answered the policeman promptly. "Saw him comin' out o' old man Small's house. He——"

"He's kiddin' you, sarge," broke in "Sliver" angrily. "I never went near the old shack; only crossed the lawn."

"Frisk 'im," commanded the sergeant tersely.

Confidently "Sliver" threw open his coat and held his hands above his head. He'd give them the laugh. With expert fingers the policeman went from one pocket to the other.

"What's these?" he demanded, pulling his hand slowly from a coat pocket. With a grin he spread out on the counter the gold salt dishes which "Sliver" had shoved in his pocket and forgotten in his momentary fright. "Sliver's" face fell. The game was up. He groaned at the thought of another stretch "up the river."

"Well, well, Sliver," chuckled the sergeant. "I'd a-thought you'd a-done better'n that in a place like Small's. Hardly worth your trouble, was it?"

"Aw, go to hell," growled "Sliver" disgustedly. Resignedly he turned and followed the policeman into the elevator to the cell floor. He glanced at the clock on the wall. Two o'clock. Things had been moving fast. Once in the cell he climbed quickly between the blankets and was soon asleep. Worry about the future had never been one of "Sliver's" besetting faults.

It seemed he had but dropped asleep when he was awakened by a light shining in his face. Startled, he sat up on his bunk. Two men were standing just inside the door, looking down at him. Detectives, thought "Sliver" quickly. But what would they want with him?

"Get up, Sliver," commanded one of the detectives. "Want to talk with you."

"Aw, hell," growled the offended sleeper. "Can't you leave a feller sleep? You got the goods on me. Let me alone, can't you?" He turned as though to lay down again.

"Yeh, we got the goods on you, Sliver," answered the taller of the two men quietly. "Sliver" turned quickly at the ominous ring in the words.

"Well, what's eatin' you, then?"

For a moment the two detectives stood staring at the seated man. "Sliver" grew uncomfortable. What were they after?

"It's about the murder, Sliver!" barked the tall man sharply. "What'd you do it for, Sliver?"

"Sliver's" face went white. Murder! What murder? Suddenly he remembered the groans and the thud he had heard. He started to speak, couldn't. Had they tied murder on him.

"Wh—what murder?" he gasped. "I—I

don't know nothin' 'bout no murder! Honest to God I don't!"

"Come on now, Sliver, spit it out," urged the tall man quietly. "We got it on you; you might as well come clean. What happened? Did you get scared before you could clean out the joint? Where's the knife?" he ended abruptly, grabbing the trembling prisoner roughly by the shoulder.

"Sliver" shook himself loose.

"What you guys tryin' to hang on me?" he exploded. "I don't know nothin' 'bout no murder nor no knife, an' that's all there is to it." His manner was bold, confident; inwardly he trembled. He had had experience with the police and their power before.

"Come on, Fred," suggested the other detective. "Let's go. Give him time to think it over. We got you dead to rights, Sliver. You can't murder a man like Small and get away with it. See? Better come clean. Save you a lot o' trouble. Judge'll probably let you off with life if you confess. If you don't——" He shrugged his shoulders as he clanged the iron door behind him, leaving "Sliver" shaking in the shadows cast by the one corridor light.

Life! And they meant it! Desperately "Sliver" reviewed the incidents of the night. His record, the salt dishes—everything was against him. He'd be convicted on almost any kind of evidence. And he hadn't the slightest chance to prove his innocence; didn't even know how the murder had been committed. They'd stick him sure, he thought despairingly. They'd have to stick some one. "Sliver" knew how such things went. Politics, a new election soon; the police would be able to point to him, "Sliver"; prominent man killed, his murderer captured immediately and convicted. Efficiency!

"Sliver" slept no more that night. Like a caged beast, he paced nervously back and forth in his cell, three steps this way, three steps back. Life! He hadn't been near the man, but who'd believe him?

At dawn he called out loudly as the guard was changed.

"Say," he demanded hoarsely, clinging to the iron bars as the guard who had been relieved passed him on his way out

"Well, what d'you want?" growled the guard impatiently.

"Them two dicks that was here last night; reckon a feller can see 'em?" "Sliver's" face, peering through the bars, was haggard, his eyes shining feverishly.

"Don't know; I'll see." The guard passed on. In spite of the damp heat of the place "Sliver" shivered as he resumed his restless pacing. Life! If he'd confess!

Two hours passed and he still strode back and forth. The sound of a key turning in the door made him spin quickly about. There stood the two detectives who had visited him during the night.

"Well, Sliver," asked the tall man cheerfully, "thought it over? Gonna come clean? What'd you do with the old man's dough?"

"Dough? Say, you guys, I ain't seen enough dough to git me a good square meal since I come out o' the big house. No, I ain't gonna come clean. I ain't got nothin' to come clean about. But I want to tell you somethin'. See?" "Sliver" twitched nervously as the two men stepped inside the cell and closed the door. Would they believe him?

He watched their faces eagerly as he recounted to them his experiences of the night before; how he had entered the house, gathered up the silver and been about to depart when he heard the groans upstairs. He grew desperate as he saw the skepticism with which they received his story. They didn't believe him!

"An' that's all I know about it; honest to God it is! I never killed nobody! Never even went upstairs?" His voice rose shrilly. "I tell you that's all I know about it."

"What'd you do with the old man's pocketbook, Sliver?" pursued the taller detective relentlessly. "Hide it some place an' expect to go back after it? Or throw it away?"

"Sliver" threw up his hands with a tragic gesture of resignation.

"Go ahead; hang it on me," he groaned. Suddenly he straightened up. "Say, if you guys'll let me go out there with you, I'll show you all I know." His eyes traveled anxiously from one man to the other. The two detectives glanced at each other. He knew what they were thinking—that perhaps he'd give himself away when confronted with the crime.

"What say, Fred?" asked the shorter detec-

tive. "The old man's still there; coroner's orders."

"Aw, he's lyin' like a fish," growled the other man. "But come on; let's see what he can show us. But don't try any funny business, "Sliver," or I'll drill you!" He patted his hip pocket significantly.

Handcuffed to the taller detective, "Sliver" was led from the station, seated in an automobile, and the three drove to the house from which he had so precipitously fled the night before. Could he only make them believe him? But the chances looked black. Evidently they had decided he was guilty and were making no attempt to find any other suspect.

"See that window there," urged "Sliver" as they drove rapidly up the driveway. "That's where I——"

"Never mind that," frowned the detective. "You come on upstairs with us."

Silently they led him up the long stairs in the hall and down a corridor on the second floor to an open door at the end. "Sliver" hung back nervously. He wanted to show them what had happened downstairs.

"Come on," growled the tall detective, jerking him roughly by the arm. He pulled him to the door. "Sliver" gasped. There on the bathroom floor, his throat cut clear across, lay the man he had seen step from the automobile the night before. Evidently he had been preparing for bed and had been killed while shaving. He was dressed in pajamas and bathrobe, while a brush covered with lather and a shaving mug stood on the shelf.

Standing over the body was an important-looking individual whom "Sliver" took to be the coroner. On the other side of the room stood an old man in the uniform of a servant.

"Hello," greeted the coroner, as the two detectives shoved "Sliver" into the room. "Got your man, eh? Well, hold him a minute till I finish with this butler."

Quickly "Sliver" conquered the fear and horror which had crept over him at sight of the body on the floor. Life! He'd have to make them believe him.

"You say Mr. Small was going to the city early this morning?" asked the coroner, turning back to the old man, while he fussily rubbed his nose-glasses on his coat sleeve. "That's probably why he was shaving last night then?"

"Yes—yes, sir," nodded the aged butler, his hands shaking violently, while he resolutely kept his eyes from the floor.

"And you were asleep when he came in last night? Come—come—speak up, man!"

"Yes—yes, sir—since his wife died, sir, he never had us wait up for him at night."

"And you say his pocketbook has disappeared? How'd you know?"

"Why, sir," exclaimed the old man, astonished at such a question, "he's always carried it, and it wasn't in his clothes when I went to clean up his room this morning—after I found—him here."

"Look any place else?"

"No—no, sir. I——"

"Well, go look some more."

Haltingly, mumbling to himself, the old man pushed past the detectives and into the hall.

"Well," barked the coroner, turning to the detectives, "bring in your man."

Resolutely "Sliver" stepped forward. He'd have to convince them now or—life!

"He admits having been in the house, but says he wasn't up here; isn't that it?" asked the coroner, turning to the detectives.

Before they could answer "Sliver" broke in hurriedly. "By all the oaths at his command he swore he had never been near the dead man.

"Why, I never——" he cried, when suddenly the room darkened. Outside a fierce rain began to beat against the house. Reaching above his head, the coroner turned on the light hanging from the ceiling.

"Looks like the fellow sneaked up behind him while he was shaving," he said, half to himself as he stepped over the figure at his feet and reached for the other light beside the shaving mirror.

"Ough!" he cried, jerking his hand back sharply. His face went momentarily white, while he wrung his hand in pain. "Some short-circuit there," he said, looking at the burn on his finger.

"Say, I——" He dropped suddenly to his knees beside the dead man. Curiously he turned over the left hand. "I wondered what these were," he mused. He turned to the right

hand. There, in the palm, was a long deep burn. "Say——" He jumped up excitedly. "Call that butler quick."

One of the detectives turned to obey, while "Sliver," bewildered by the man's action, but at the same time hoping, watched silently.

"Was this light burning when you found him here?" demanded the coroner of the old butler when he appeared, pointing to the light hanging from the ceiling.

"Yes—yes, sir," replied the butler, trembling. "I—I turned it off myself."

"Oh, you did, did you? Was this one burning?" motioning toward the wall light.

"No, sir."

"All right; get out!"

He turned to the detectives, who stood watching him curiously.

"Well, I'll be—— If I'm right this is the queerest thing I've ever run up against. Give me your torch. We ought to find a razor somewhere."

Taking the electric torch from the detective, he got down on his knees. With a satisfied "Ah," he reached beneath the bathtub. "Sliver" leaned forward excitedly.

"There's your murderer," said the coroner calmly, turning to the detectives and holding out a steel, straight-edge razor. Congealed blood covered the blade. "Well, I'll be——" He paused, unable to express his astonishment at his discovery. Pulling a small magnifying glass from his pocket, he studied the razor handle carefully, then the thumb of the dead man.

"His own finger-prints," he murmured abstractedly. He jumped to his feet.

"That man wasn't murdered," he announced decisively. "And he didn't commit suicide either. It's the queerest thing I ever saw. Look here——"

Standing over the feet of the figure on the floor, he took a position directly in front of the shaving mirror.

"Here he was shaving," he described. "See—the right half of his face is shaved. He got to his chin; the light wasn't good. That light up there"—pointing to the light from the ceiling—"he couldn't see under his chin. He had his razor in his right hand, ready to scrape his neck. He reached for this light here at the side. His hand must have been wet from the lather.

"When he pulled that chain he got a shock—a hell of a shock! It jerked his right hand across his throat. See!" He demonstrated with his hands how it had happened. "The same shock threw the razor from his hand. It landed over there under the bathtub. If it hadn't been for these burns and that leaky fixture there, you'd probably have been sent up, young man," he declared, glaring over his glasses at "Sliver," who stood staring at him open-mouthed. "It's the——"

At that instant the old butler appeared in the door.

"Here's the pocketbook, sir," he said apologetically. "I found it in his other clothes. I—I guess he changed it there with his other things so's he could dress quicker this morning."

"Oh, you guess, do you?" sneered the coroner, turning back to "Sliver." "Well, young man, you're lucky."

"He's not so lucky, I reckon," interrupted the tall detective. "He'll get a couple of years anyway for the little job he did last night."

"Couple o' years," laughed "Sliver" joyously. "Huh! Couple of years! That's better'n life. Come on; let's go."

Two years! It might well have been two weeks for all "Sliver" cared now. Life! Ugh!

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

Mesmerized by a Lion

CHARLES F. STEWART, formerly an ensign in the Navy, now a resident of St. Louis, spent ten years of his life in India. Stewart was always fond of hunting and adventure, lion hunting having been his favorite sport in India. He is not a believer in the theory of lion tamers that the steady glance of the human eye will subdue the wildest of the king of beasts. In fact, Stewart came very near losing his life in making a test of that kind. The story told in his own words is as follows:

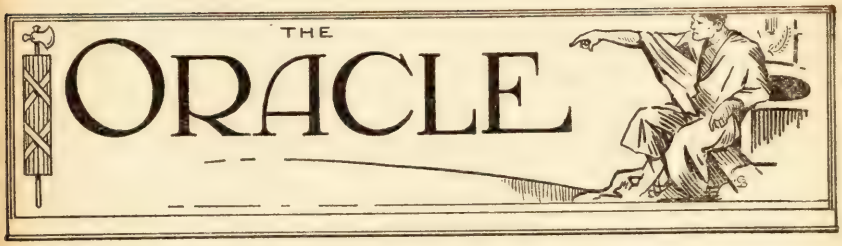
"In 1921 three friends of mine visited India, and they wanted to go lion hunting. I made up a party composed of half a dozen Americans, a number of natives, my visitors and myself. We went into the jungle for a big camp hunt, and were successful from the start. Several lions had been killed without special adventure, but on the fourth day I met with an experience which cured me of lion hunting.

"We were driving through the jungle slowly and our party became separated. I had worked my way through the dense undergrowth probably a mile when I suddenly discovered that I was out of sight and hearing of all my companions. I was well in advance of them and turned to retrace my steps. I had gone only about a hundred feet when one of the largest lions I ever saw suddenly leaped into the path I had made by my passage, not more than fifty feet from me. The beast had been aroused by the advance of my party. The animal discovered me at the same instant that I saw him. I raised my rifle, and for once fired without taking careful aim, and my bullet went wide of the mark. I started to reload my gun when the ugly beast, with a loud growl, commenced to creep slowly towards me.

"I raised my head and looked right at the lion's eyes. Then I thought of that old showman's gag about the steady gaze of the human eye, and I tried it. The trouble was the beast could give me ten yards the start and then outgaze me. As I looked into those great red and yellow eyes they seemed to be balls of fire as big as my head. The beast disappeared; I saw nothing but the eyes. The strangest feeling I ever experienced came over me, and then I realized that, instead of exercising some kind of mesmeric influence over the lion, he had gained that power over me.

"All this time I noticed that the terrible beast was slowly creeping toward me as a cat creeps on its prey. Back of the terrible eyes I could see what appeared to be a dark shadow swaying from side to side, and I knew the beast was lashing its tail slowly as it advanced. I felt that nothing could save me, but I could not move. My whole life passed in review in my mind in an instant.

"Suddenly the great eyes which held me entralled seemed to be perfectly still for an instant and I knew the end was coming—the lion was near enough to make a spring. I trid to close my eyes, but could not. I saw the great yellow form and the two balls of fire rise from the ground and at the same moment I heard a report which, to my strained nerves, seemed like the discharge of a battery of artillery. Then I lost consciousness. When my senses returned I was lying on the ground at our camp, surrounded by the entire party of hunters, who had given me up for dead. I had been unconscious more than four hours, and so great had been the strain on my nervous system it was a week before I fully regained my strength. Five of my party, it appears, had been following the trail of the lion, and they arrived just in time to save my life. It was their rifle shots I heard, all five of them having shot the lion just as he was crouching for a spring. The beast leaped five feet in the air and fell dead. I had enough of lion hunting. I was in India three years after that, but never hunted the king of beasts again."



The Mystery of Man and How to Solve It

By RUSSELL RAYMOND VOORHEES

PART V—PHRENOLOGY.

IN the last issue I discussed the science of Physiognomy and showed how it could indicate character. In this article I will take up Phrenology, or the science of the mind as indicative of character. Since both sciences are somewhat related it might be well for every reader to get the connection and also the distinction.

Phrenology, which I will discuss in this article, is the science of the mind and is applied by noting the contour of the top portion of the head, since the head is the location of the brain. In other words, the phrenologist believes that every characteristic and ability or faculty of a person is the result of a more pronounced development of a part of the brain, and since this is true the characteristic or faculty will be evident from the outside of the brain. Phrenologists believe that the brain is split up into parts, each part of which has certain functions.

On the other hand, physiognomists believe that character and ability can be told from an examination of the features of the face and in a general way from an examination of the whole body. However, they admit that facial characteristics are the rest of brain development and in many cases they show the connection between a brain development and the facial expression of a trait or ability. So while they admit that chaarcteristics visible in the face are caused by the development of the brain, they prefer to delineate character by means of the facial expression entirely.

Phrenologists, however, claim that their science is the more accurate since they go to the source for their information. It is well to note, however, that phrenologists are showing a tendency more and more to not consider the top portion of the head alone, but the entire person, so that Phrenology is tending to take on more and more of the science of Physiognomy, while Physiognomy appears to be standing where it has stood for years and years and even ages.

It will be well for every reader to get this difference firmly fixed in his mind, since some of the points that will be made in this article will be the same as some made in my last article on Physiognomy.

Phrenology is not a new science, neither is it as old as some of the other sciences that I have discussed. Doctor Gall, a physician of Vienna, is generally credited with being the father of Phrenology, although he so soon became associated with Doctor Spurzheim that the two are frequently mentioned as being the fathers of the science. The facts that are to-

day a part of Phrenology were all obtained by deducting reasoning. Doctors Gall and Spurzheim traveled extensively over Europe visiting hospitals, institutions, asylums, prisons and other places where a large number of people could be found. They examined and measured heads and by a comparison of notes discovered that certain traits were characterized by a larger development of certain portions of the brain, which in turn could be noted even through the skull. Continued deductive reasoning and investigation have advanced Phrenology until to-day it has many followers and believers.

Without going too deeply into the question it would seem to be a very easy matter to prove Phrenology by deductive reasoning. It is common knowledge that a muscle that is never used is small, flabby and unnoticeable, while a muscle that is used is prominent. Exercise develops the lungs and in turn the chest is developed until it measures considerably more than the chest of the undeveloped person.

Now, if exercise can develop and enlarge the muscles of the body and cause the chest to increase in circumference, is it not entirely plausible to believe that continual exercise of various parts of the brain will result in a similar development and enlargement? If my readers will accept that logic and reasoning then they must admit that continued exercise or functioning of any part of the brain will develop that part until it is more noticeable than the same part before development.

And if the reader is ready to admit this it does not seem to be asking too much for him to believe this point: That if a faculty is present in the brain sufficiently strong to be capable of development and use, then its presence must be detectable even if only slightly. The undeveloped muscle in the arm or leg is evident, although only slightly. And so by the same reasoning it would seem that the various faculties of the brain if present could be detected by an examination of the skull. And so, while my reasoning may have been rather hurried and bold at times, I do not think it is entirely unreasonable. On the other hand, I believe a simple proof of Phrenology is comparatively easy. To me it is not so much a question of whether it could be thus and so, but rather a question of whether it is thus and so. And even here my answer is yes. I believe Phrenology can and does help solve the mystery of man. What have you to say?

Phrenologists divide all people into three groups. the Mental, the Motive and the Vital, just as the Physiognomists do. And they also have several subdivisions for people who are a mixture of two types. And not only that, but their descriptions of these three types is the same as the descriptions of the three types as given by the Physiognomists. However, the Phrenologist goes a bit farther and hooks up each of these three types of people to definite brain developments.

The Mental type of person is one whose mentality is the largest developed. They are the brain workers, the thinkers and planners, the brilliants and wits of the ages. They are the keen people, quick, mentally awake almost day and night it would seem.

The Motive type of person is the doer. The portion of brain that acts as the dynamo or engine in such a person is well developed, and while the purely mental type is liable to be rather weak and somewhat deficient physically, the Motive type has those faculties that give him ambition, pep and force well developed.

The Vital type of person is one whose social faculties predominate. The Vital type person likes to eat, drink and be merry. He is the center of any social gathering. He has a host of friends, too many for his own good, and this means, if it means anything, that the social faculties of his brain are fully developed.

If the reader will go over what I said about the three types of people in my article on Physiognomy in the last issue, and will then read what I have just said about the same three types in the light of Phrenology, he will see that this science throws added light on the three classes of temperament, and purely from the basis of the brain.

Before I go any farther into the subject of Phrenology I want to make clear that the size of the brain or the head, *per se,* is not to be taken to mean anything. A person with a large head is not naturally smarter or endowed with a more developed mentality than a person with a small head. Such reasoning is no more true than that a five-cent piece is worth more than a ten-cent piece because it is larger. So

the reader with a larger head, measuramentally speaking, should save his bravos until later. Possibly he won't need them.

I will make one more reference to Physiognomy and then will take up the purely Phrenological phase of the subject. In my last article on Physiognomy, in discussing the forehead, I mentioned the development just over the eyes, the development in the central portion of the forehead and the development of the forehead just under the hair. Since these developments in the forehead are really caused by a development of the brain at that point, it follows that what I said in regard to the forehead applies with equal force to Phrenology. And since so much is shown in the forehead it would be well to read over that portion again before going farther into the subject of character delineation by means of Phrenology.

The first group of faculties that we will consider I will designate by the term Moral Sentiments. This included all of the finer developments of character, such as hope, benevolence, veneration, conscientiousness, mirthfulness and others of a similar nature. They are the qualities that place us on various social planes and mark us with a finer mentality and a personality of a higher or lower order, as the case may be.

These faculties are united in a group and are located in the upper portion of the head, beginning at about the hair line on the forehead and extending straight back to about the point that would be on a straight line drawn over the top of the head and between the centre of the two ears. The width of this portion of the brain is somewhat less than the length, or about one-third the distance from the top of the head to the top of the ears on either side. When this portion of the head is well developed it gives to that person the qualities that I mentioned as being seated in that part of the brain. Such people will be found to have hope, to be benevolent, to be conscientious and in a general way to possess the finer distinctions of character.

The various faculties that go to make up these several characteristics of a higher order are each located in a separate part or portion of that section of the brain, but it is somewhat more difficult to point them out and possibly it will be just as valuable for the purpose of a beginner if he knows the location of the group of faculties and not the location of each separate faculty. Even the general information here given will enable the reader to test Phrenology and see whether he believes in it. If he does it will be an easy matter for him to go farther into the science.

Directly below the faculties of Moral Sentiments are located the Semi-Intellectual Sentiments, which furnish the ability and desire to obtain knowledge. They are the faculties that enable us to obtain information in most cases; they secure an understanding of the information so collected and to pass judgment in regard to the information. These faculties are located directly below the Moral Sentiments and extend toward the ear about a quarter of the distance from the top of the head to the ear. This leaves a space a little more than a third of the distance from the top of the head to the ear for the location of another group of faculties or sentiments.

A person with this portion of his head well developed will be interested in the intellectual things in life. Study and the obtaining of knowledge will appeal to him very much, and not only will it appeal to him, but he won't be happy until he satisfies his desires.

Of course, these faculties are divided into various subdivisions, and to know them is to be able to be more specific as to the type of intellect; but I will not go into that here.

Centered around the ear and taking up the remaining space on the sides of the head up to the Semi-Intellectual Sentiments, and running back to about half the distance from the ear to the back of the head, we find the Selfish Propensities. These faculties give us our animal nature, and when this portion of the head is well developed it gives to that individual a combativeness, a destructiveness and secretiveness that may be too pronounced. In a general way these faculties represent the animal in a person, just as the Semi-Intellectual Sentiments represent the mentality and higher developments. Every one needs a certain amount of these faculties; for instance, combativeness is necessary for a person to enable him to forge ahead and get to his goal in spite of the opposition put in his way. But too great a development of this faculty will

make the person too hard to get along with for his own good.

And the same is true of destructiveness, which is located in this same area. All of us should have some of this faculty, the desire to destroy, because it is only when the old is destroyed that we can build up the new, but when this faculty is over-developed it will mean a characteristic that must be curbed. So it is safe to say that an over-development of any portion of this section of the brain should be a warning to that person to do some character building so that his other faculties can be strengthened.

The extreme back portion of the head from the Selfish Propensities, straight back and up about to a point that would be on a line with the central portion of the forehead, are located the Domestic Propensities. These faculties give to the person his love for the social and domestic being, his love for family and relatives, and relate to home, marriage and the entire social fabric of civiliation. When this portion of the head is well developed it marks the person as one having a love and esteem for these things. On the other hand, the person with a small development of this portion of the head will not show these traits of character. Travelers and those who love to travel and see the world very frequently are found to have a very small development of this portion of the head where the faculty of Inhabitiveness is located, which is the extreme upper portion of the section wherein are located the Domestic Propensities.

We now have one remaining portion of the head or brain to consider. It is that section just above the section wherein is located the Domestic Propensities and below or rather in back of the section containing the Moral Sentiments and above the area containing the Selfish Propensities. This portion of the brain or head contains the Selfish Sentiments. They are somewhat akin to the Selfish Propensities, except that they are somewhat more elevating. The Selfish Propensities have to do more with the animal side of a person, while the Selfish Sentiments are somewhat more superior. Such traits of character as firmness, self-esteem and caution are located in this portion of the brain. When this area is well developed it should be taken as a danger signal, just as a well development of the Selfish Propensities section of the head should be taken as a danger signal. Certainly we can suffer from a too-marked development of the faculties of firmness, self-esteem and caution. On the other hand, those people who have practically no development of this portion of the head will be found to be in want of some of these characteristics and should do their best to develop this side of this character. However, if these faculties are well developed and in addition the person has a well-developed Moral Sentiment portion of the brain, he can feel sure that these higher sentiments will overbalance the baser ones and eliminate any faults that a well development of the Selfish Sentiments would produce.

In reading character by means of Phrenology it should always be borne in mind that every faculty can either be well developed or not developed at all, and that in between these two extremes there are several gradual increases and decreases of development that indicate a corresponding increase or decrease of the faculty related to that section or portion of the brain. For instance, a person can be extremely firm or they can absolutely lack any trace of firmness. And in between these two extremes there can be several shades of firmness ranging from just a trace of the characteristic to a considerable development of it, but still not as great as a well development would indicate.

The information that I have given relative to Phrenology will enable the reader to apply it to himself and friends and test out its value. Personally I believe that Phrenology when gone into a bit deeper than I could go into it in this single article can be of utmost value to people in advising them of their real character, weaknesses and strengths, abilities and characteristics. I believe that it helps solve the science of man. Do you?

In my next article I will discuss the science of Numerology, or numbers, and show how it is possible to indicate character by means of the science of numbers. Many believe that this is another helpful science in solving the age-old problem of the Mystery of Man.

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Current News

FLOATING FISH POND

When the steamship George Washington sailed the other day for a three-months' cruise of the Mediterranean it carried a special tank filled with various varieties of fresh fish. When fish is ordered in the dining rooms, the chef will telephone the aquarium. The fish will be caught, killed, prepared and served while the guests wait, an epochal idea in steamship service. Aboard were eighty-four millionaires.

MONTCLAIR PLANS CURFEW LAW FOR ITS DOGS AND ROOSTERS

There are a lot of early roosters that soon will be referred to at family dinner tables as the late chanticleer and a lot of all-night dogs that never will be referred to again if an ordinance which passed its first reading the other day in Montclair, N. J., is adopted.

The ordinance would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of $10, to harbor a rooster which crows between 10 p. m. and 6 a. m., or a dog which barks between those hours.

SLEEPS THREE DAYS

Miss Phyllis Hewitt, sixteen years of age, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Archie Hewitt, who live near Corunna, Ind., woke up Wednesday afternoon after having slept since Sunday evening.

Her parents went visiting Sunday afternoon, and on their return found the girl asleep. Monday morning the parents were unable to rouse the girl. A physician was called, but he failed to wake her.

When the girl was left alone for a few moments Wednesday afternoon she woke up and called her mother. The girl said she thought she had slept about three hours. After taking some nourishment, her condition apparently was normal.

LATHES 210 FEET LONG

It is not generally known that the largest gun lathes of the United States are at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., and at the armor plant, Charleston, S. C. The huge lathes, 210 feet in length, can turn steel castings as large as 8 feet in diameter and 90 feet long. These lathes, which were intended to turn guns surpassing even mammoth German Big Berthas, are driven by motors manufactured by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company.

PREHISTORIC FREIGHT

When the cargo of a ship was unloaded recently at Portland, Oregon, it was discovered that a certain portion, which was supposed to consist of walrus tusks, proved to be the ivory tusks of the mastodon. Crafty Siberian natives had substituted these for the walrus ivory which was ordered. The cheaters, however, cheated themselves, for in spite of its great age the substitute was well preserved, and the large size of the tusks consequently made them more valuable.

"GHOST" OUT IN CALIFORNIA

Chico has a rival of the ghost of Antigonish, only the local wraith operates in the daytime and throws rocks instead of slapping wrists and starting fires. Its target is a warehouse, and, according to a statement by the police today, it rarely misses.

The other day the superintendent of the warehouse sent a workman up to sweep the rocks off the roof. The workman had no sooner got under way than a big red brick hissed by his ear. He ducked, but a barrage of smaller bricks and rocks routed him. Watches have been set to "lay" the ghost, who has been operating almost daily for more than three weeks, but no traces have been found of it.

GOLD AND SILVER IN SHALE

The association between Colorado and gold and Colorado and shale is well understood, says the Scientific American, but the idea that gold and silver may be found in shale as well as oil is a new one. The shale is distilled for its oil content, and then the carbonized product is put through the cyanide process for its gold, silver and platinum content.

SQUIRRELS AND TOADSTOOLS

An English naturalist reports that squirrels are fond of fungoid plants. His observation of the animals in their natural haunts showed that they ate with evident relish the Fly Agaric, a mushroom deadly poisonous to man. It was noted, though, that they ate only the stalks of the plants, leaving the umbrella, or cap, untouched. This raises the question as to whether the factor of safety lies in the immunity of the animal or in the fact that the poisonous substance is concentrated in the rejected parts. If the latter be true, it reveals an interesting feature of the instinctive feature of the instinctive discrimination of these animals.

COLOR OF GROUND AFFECTS PLANTS

Some curious experiments as to the effect of the color of the soil were recently described in the French journal La Traction Moderne, and quoted in the Scientific American. These experiments were made in a vineyard. The surface of the soil was lightly covered with reinforced concrete, a suitable space being left vacant around each vine stock. One-third of this concreted surface was painted white, another third ochre red, and the remainder black; the results were very remarkable, since in those plots which had been painted red and black the vines were twice as vigorous as on the white plots. The reason for this is that the temperature of the ground is considerably higher in those areas having either a red or a black color, and this increase of temperature has an immediate effect upon the growth of the plants. These studies throw light on the superiority of the soil of certain territory, such as the black earth in Morocco. It has been noted, too, that the earth in some of the best grape-bearing localities in the South of France is either reddish or black, and this no longer appears as a mere accident.

A WILD WOMAN

F. P. Mitchell, field man for a petroleum company, has arrived at Booneville, Ky., from the Owsley County mountain territory bearing wounds which will keep him disabled for some time. He will probably be scarred for life.

Mitchell says he was attacked by a wild woman. She was armed with a knife, or razor, and rushed at Mitchell, slashing him several times on the hands.

Mitchell notified the officers, and a posse was sent after the woman, but no trace of her could be discovered. Mitchell says she was half clad and presented the appearance of having wandered a long time in the mountains. Many persons have seen the woman, but so far as is known, Mitchell is the only person she has attacked.

A JERSEY GHOST

Investigation of the "ghost" which disturbed Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Decker in their farmhouse between Fredon and Yellow Frame, N. J., has disclosed the fact that stories of the century-old house being haunted have been rife for many years. Decker has been besieged by telephone messages since, it was said, the "ghost" visited the front porch Thursday and Friday nights at midnight.

Edgar Hunt, a farmer who recently left the neighborhood after sixty-five years, said that when he was 20 he saw the "ghost," and that David Swayze, who owned the house, which was then the old Wayside Inn, admitted to Hunt that he also had seen it.

Fifteen years previously an old peddler had been murdered mysteriously at the inn, said Hunt, who asserted that the tradition of the house being haunted was known all over the county, but that nothing had been heard of it until two years ago, when Mrs. Dellie Shotwell, who sold the place to Decker, was awakened at midnight by a rapping.

When Swayze saw the "ghost," Hunt said, he fired at it with his double-barreled shotgun.

MYSTERY CHEST OPEN

In 1885 Edward Bell's uncle bequeathed him a 600-pound brass-bound chest. It was brought from the gold fields of the West and had reposed in Bell's home in Defiance, Ohio, for thirty-seven years.

Bell had steadfastly refused to open the chest. Recently John Kerns was appointed guardian for Bell and was authorized by the court to open it.

With the court room packed by curious spectators, Porbate Judge C. W. Palmer broke open the chest with a sledgehammer. In it were found three musty vests, a bundle of patent medicine recipes, several pictures of women, some old love letters and a photo of "Buffalo Bill."

BEGGAR AVERAGES $100 A WEEK; HAS $1,000 IN BANKS

Charles McCabe, sixty-three, self-described professional panhandler, of New York, was sentenced to three months in the workhouse recently. He explained how easy it was to beg his living when arraigned before Magistrate Jean Norris.

McCabe was arrested by Detective Lavender, who found him holding his hands and arms in such a position that he appeared to be badly crippled. McCabe said he had collected $8 during the hour previous to his arrest, and that he had averaged $100 a week for the last eight weeks. In his possession were bank books showing deposits in various banks totaling $1,000.

ELEPHANTS RAID A STATION

We are used to stories of how an elephant occasionally upsets a circus, but it is rare we hear of an orgy of destruction like that which occurred in the Malay Peninsula. A herd of wild elephants attacked a railway station, pulling down the station master's kitchen and bathroom. They did the same to the clerk's quarters and then tackled the station while the office force looked on from trees. One elephant took off an automatic weighing machine as a souvenir of the raid, but finding it heavy, threw it down on the track. One of the elephants trumpeted the recall and they all went back into the jungle except one who fell in a well and had to be got out by human aid, but was not detained. By the time help arrived after a general telegraphic alarm the huge beasts had entirely disappeared.

GOLD-BEARING SANDS

It is said that there is not a stream rising in the mountains of Luzon—and the same is true of other islands of the Philippine group—which has not its gold-bearing sands. The aluvial deposits of the precious metal have been garnered for many years, but no thorough exploitation for gold at its sources in the mountains has been made because the Spaniards were unable to conquer the tribes inhabiting the interior regions, and American enterprise has not yet been enlightened in this matter.

Some of these tribes are said to look upon the digging up the earth as a sacrilege, and they will not seek gold in that way lest the wrath of the gods should grow hot against them.

DR. MAY DEPLORES USE OF SCIENCE AS VEHICLE FOR FAKES AND FRAUDS

"Psychology is not a patent medicine."

This is the dictum issued by Dr. Mark A. May, head of the department of psychology, Syracuse University.

"There is a general idea current," said Dr. May, "to the effect that when everything else has failed, psychology is a cure for all ills. The science of psychology is the study of human nature. If what some of these self-styled psychologists teach is psychology, then what I teach is something else."

Following is a list of the things which Dr. May says psychology is not:

1. A study of the mysterious, occult and spooky.
2. Psychic research.
3. Mind reading or fortune telling.
4. Mental telepathy.
5. An attempt to explain the psychological wonders that appear in vaudeville.
6. Study of palm reading or bumps on the head.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13. "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29. "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
77 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89. "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
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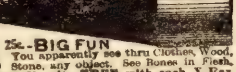

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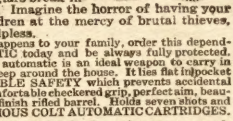

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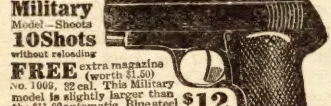

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